I

T O IL PRINT

The 2013 edition of BEST OF FILM PRINT reflects the dynamic processes in the Georgian film industry.

The year 2013 has been extremely interesting and fruitful. The films presented at Berlinale 2013 gained success both locally and internationally – one example of this being "In Bloom" (a Georgian-French-German co-production). In Georgia this film attracted both youngsters and their parents, while outside the country it has charmed foreign audiences and been awarded numerous prizes. Another successful film was Zaza Urushadze's "Tangerines" (a Georgian-Estonian coproduction financed by Eurimages), which enchanted film professionals and audiences at the festivals in Warsaw, Tallinn, Mannheim and Los Angeles.

This year Levan Koghuashvili's contemporary lyrical comedy "Blind Dates" will take part in the Berlinale Forum. The film proves that the Georgian film tradition is reviving and that humor, a philosophical take on life and self-irony are returning to our films. The Berlinale panorama includes Tinatin Kajrishvili's debut film "The Brides" (a Georgian-French co-production).

A new Georgian film "Brother" will shortly be released (a Georgian-French co-production). This is a terrifying story about the difficult times of the 1990s and a family of intellectuals where one brother is a musician and the other is a robber.

The follow-up annual European training courses have been extremely productive. The Georgian film sector is gaining a good reputation within the European film industry. New names and themes are appearing on our film horizon. Georgian projects have achieved significant success at the festivals in Locarno and Sarajevo, and these projects will soon be turned into films.

This year we hosted the Eurimages President Jobst Plog and he got to know many Georgian filmmakers. Other prominent guests in Georgia were French film star Fanny Ardant, Director of Giffoni Children's Film Festival Claudio Gubitosi, Berlinale representative Nikolai Nikitin and Ronan Girre - Chief Executive and Head of Studies at Ace Producers.

There is still a lot to do within the country. Our new initiative is to bring the films to the viewing public. That is why we are organizing special field screenings of new Georgian films for soldiers, and we have planned a new program for the 2014 entitled Cinema at School, which aims to show children both classic films and masterpieces of Georgian cinema and thus acquaint them with our film culture.

The ACE session will be held in Georgia in 2014. In addition, we will be involved in the ceremony for the European Academy Awards for Youth Films. On May 4th, together with other European capitals, Tbilisi will participate in this exciting voting procedure online.

So we are looking forward to many interesting and exciting events.
Thank you for your attention.

Nana Janelidze / Natia Kanteladze

Photo: Nana Mepharishvili, Zinka Barnovi

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filmprint

On the Cover: Still from the feature film "A Fold in My Blanket"

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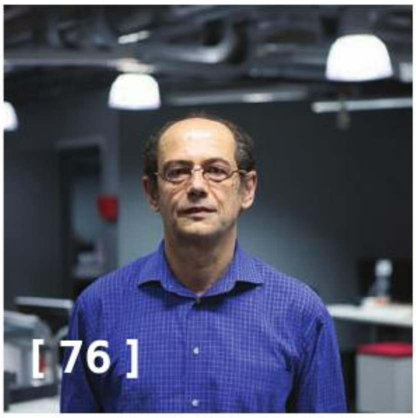

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RLIN L -

The development of the Berlin International Film Festival – Berlinale – is related to the history of Germany and the city of Berlin.

The idea to hold a film festival in Berlin, aimed at the revival of the German film industry destroyed in World War II, came from American military officer Oscar Martey. For the city, which was divided into a number of zones by the allies, the film festival would be a window to the free world. In summer 1951 the first film festival in West Berlin was held in a suburban cinema Titania-Palast as all the cinemas in the city center were destroyed during the war.

The establishment of the festival in West Berlin was immediately followed by the setting up of a people's democratic festival in East Berlin. The focus of this festival was films created in the countries of the Eastern bloc.

Starting in 1952, Berlinale screenings took place in a newly-opened cinema Zoo Palast located in the city center. This lasted until 2000, when Berlinale moved to Potsdamer Platz. In the 1950s Berlinale was glamorous and focused on film stars. Until the construction of the Berlin wall in 1961, the festival was also visited by the people of East Berlin. Among other prizes, the Festival awarded an audience prize.

In 1956, based on the decision of the international federation of film producers associations (FIAPF), Berlinale became an A-class festival, allowing its organizers to invite an international jury. In 1960s, due to political tensions and the cold war, the festival lost its audience of 50,000 from East Berlin. Under Soviet pressure, the countries of the Socialist camp were unable to take part in the competition. West Berlin became the epicenter in the confrontation of cold war ideologies.

In 1970s, due to the efforts and political strategy of Chancellor Willy Brandt, the ideological confrontation was weakened and socialist Europe gained access to Berlinale. The first film from the Eastern block to participate in Berlinale was Russian Sergey Soloviov's "Hundred Days After Childhood".

Since the 1970s Berlinale has gained fame as a political festival. In this period, in parallel to the competition program, a new section Forum "was added upon the initiative of the Friends of German Cinematheque. Forum focused on the cinema of the Soviet and Eastern block countries. "Forum Expanded" still concentrates on political films, works by young unknown directors, as well as innovative and experimental films.

In 1986 another official section of the Festival – Panorama – was established, presenting new films by famous directors, debuts and discoveries, author's films and art-house films. This section also screens documentaries (Panorama Dokumente) and short films (Panorama Short).

Generation – a section established in 1978 has two subsections: Generation KPlus (2007) and Generation 14plus. The section aims to present films created by talented young filmmakers and films for children and teenagers.

Since 2006 Berlinale has presented short films in a separate section called Berlinale Shorts.

One of the important sections of the festival is Retrospective. Together with Berlin Film Museum, this section screens classic films and organizes film-related conferences.

Sections: Perspective Deutsches Kino and German Cinema _ LOLA@Berlinale are aimed at the promotion of national cinema.

In 2003 Wim Wenders initiated Berlinale Talent Campus, enabling young filmmakers to attend master-classes, meet producers and develop their projects.

In 2013 another new section was added: NATIVE - Indigenous Cinema, covering films from Australia, New Zealand, the islands of the Pacific Ocean and the indigenous population of America.

In 2013 Berlinale had an unprecedented number of viewers. As compared to 2012, despite a weak competition program, the 404 films presented at Berlinale this year were seen by a total audience of 303,077. The Festival had 19,630 accredited guests, including 3694 journalists from 124 countries. The major film markets of the world – the European Film Market and Berlinale Co–Poduction Market - presented 816 films from 91 countries.

In order to buy tickets, festival visitors spent the night in sleeping bags in front of the box offices. Accredited guests had to stand in line from dawn in order to buy tickets for the following day.

This year's Berlinale opened on February 7th with Wong Kar Wai's "Grandmaster". The refined and poetical Hong Kong director Wong Kar Wai was Chair of the Grand Jury this year. The story of the film unrolls against the background of the occupation of China by the Japanese in the 1930s. The film is about the unhappy love of two great masters of ancient the Chinese martial art of Kung Fu. The action takes place in a hermetic closed space. Using close-ups and metaphorical, ornamented images, the director tries to express the melancholy of the main characters. The image is beautiful, although stretched in time, and is well-suited to the nostalgic one-dimensional story of the film.

The three best films in the main competition were all from Eastern Europe. After the festival some film critics spoke about the advantages of Eastern European cinema over other films presented at this year's festival.

The Golden Bear was awarded to Romanian Calin Peter Netzer's film "Child's Pose" (also called "Pozitia copilului"). The film was also awarded the Fipress Prize. Netzer's social drama de-

scribes the mechanism of contemporary Romanian social relationships against the the background of a mother-and-child story. The film is about the struggle of a non-compromising well-off mother for the welfare of her child, who has killed a schoolboy while driving at high speed. The director tells the story in a realistic, documentary manner, while brilliant acting makes the story particularly vivid.

The Silver Bear was awarded to Bosnian Danis Tanovic for his film "An Episode from the Life of an Iron Picker". Best Actor was awarded to the main actor in this film Nazif Mujic – a non-professional actor who performs himself in the film. The film, produced with an incredibly low budget of 17,000 Euros, is about a family of gipsies. It is distinguished by its documentary, naturalist manner of narration. At the press-conference after the screening, the director said that initially he wanted to make a documentary about the hardships of a gipsy family. However, having met this family, he changed his mind. Every actor plays the role of him or herself in the film. In my opinion, the main merit of this film is the responsibility the director shows towards the socially acute problems of contemporary European gipsies.

Kazakh Emir Baigazin's debut "Harmony Lessons" describes the mechanisms of violence and alientation of an individual from the social environment. The film tells about the complicated process of perception of his on environment and his own self by an outsider teenager. The director of photography of this film was awarded a Silver Bear for unique artistic achievements.

"In The Name Of" by Polish director Malgoska Szumowska was one of the favourites of this year's competition. The film ended up with the prize for Best Film on the Issue of Sexual Minorities (the Teddy Award). The story takes place in a poor Polish village and tells about the relationships of a Catholic priest Adam and problematic teenagers. The film describes the loneliness and despair of the main character, using impressive symbols of the Gospel. Adam is a homosexual who became a priest in an attempt to escape from his sexual identity.

Iranian Jafar Panahi's "Closed Curtain" was presented by his co-writer Kambuzia Partovi, because the Iranian authorities prohibited Panahi from working as a director. In three days Panahi managed to make a film about the prohibitions and repressions, despair and fears in the totalitarian system. The Jury awarded the Silver Bear to this film for Best Script. Soon information spread on the Festival blog that Panahi's co-author and the actors participating in this film were also prohibited from working in their professions.

The main themes of this year's Berlinale were personal and religious identity and individual rebellion. For example, the famous French representative of author's films Bruno Dumont entered Berlinale with "Camille Claudel, 1915", starring Juliette Binoche. This is a film about the tragic life of a French sculptor. Other French films included Emmanuelle Bercot's "On My Way" with Catherine Deneuve. Among the winners of the Festival were Sebastian Lelio's "Gloria" with the audience's favourite Paulina Garcia, awarded Silver Bear as Best Actress; South Korean Hong San Soo's "Nobody's Daughter Haewoon" telling the story of the love between a girl student and a professor of film direction; French Guillaume Nicloux's "The Nun" telling about the aspiration of a nun to freedom and her tragic life in the convent (starring Pauline Etienne, Martina Gedeck and Isabelle Huppert) and Russian Boris Khlebnikov's social drama "A Long and Happy Life", telling about the rebellion of the individual against the corrupt state system.

The American films in the competition program were Gus Van Sant's "Promised Land" and Steven Soderberg's "Side Effects". Despite interesting themes and famous actors, these films were characterized by Hollywood's narrative clichés. This was especially apparent with regard to Soderberg's film, which, despite being politial and critical, could not escape the framework of the genre.

The Silver Bear for Best Direction was awarded to independent American film-director David Gordon Green for his comic road movie "Prince Avalanche", told in a laconic, minimalistic visual narrative manner. This award was a surprise for the director as well as for the festival guests.

The Alfred Bauer Prize for innovative vision was awarded to Canadian director Denis Cote for the film "Vic + Flo Saw a Bear".

An honorary Golden Bear for his contribution to the development of cinema was awarded to famous French documentary director Claude Lanzmann, who took part in the French Resistance and is the author of the legendary film "Shoah" dedicated to the Holocaust. Lanzmann was a friend of Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Francoise Sagan. An onorary Bear was also awarded to Isabella Rosellini.

Georgian films took part in various sections of this year's Berlinale.

"In Bloom" by Nana Ekvtimishvili and Simon Gross was a real discovery for the Forum and was also awarded the CICAE Independent Jury Prize.

The panorama opened with Zaza Rusadze's "A Fold in My Blanket", which was also nominated for a Teddy.

The section German Cinema _ LOLA@ Berlinale screened Dito Tsintsadze's "Invasion", which was nominated for the German Prize in 2013.

>>

Simon Gross and Nana Ekvtimishvili; crew of future film "A Fold in My Blanket" with Tamara Tatishvili and Nikolay Nikitin.

T N C

This year the Georgian National Film Center took part in the European Film Market within the 63rd Berlinale for the eighth time.

A Georgian stand was opened offering detailed information to festival guests about the current state of the Georgian film industry and new project development strategies.

The stand offered a catalogue of recent Georgian films and a CD of trailers, as well as information brochures about the National Film Center, a disc of recent Georgian short films and information about filming conditions in Georgia. The Georgian stand organized meetings with the partners and international colleagues of the Georgian National Film Center.

GNFC's participation in the Berlinale Co–Production Market was extremely fruitful. This two-day event gathered together 450 international professionals. This year Georgia was represented as one of the partners with realistic opportunities of being involved in the European co-production scheme. At the Country Session, the Director of GNFC Tamar Tatishvili talked about film production in Georgia and rules and examples of cooperation with Georgian producers. The Georgian participants at the meetings were Ana Dziapshipa, Tinatin Kajrishvili, Noshrevan Chkhaidze, Nana Ekvtimishvili, Simon Gross and Zaza Rusadze.

Last year Georgia joined the regional space of the Sarajevo Film Festival. In Berlin this year, GNFC and the Sarajevo Film Festival organized a reception aimed at future cooperation and the establishment of close links between the filmmakers of the two countries.

In order to celebrate the success of recent Georgian films at Berlinale, on February 10th GNFC organized a reception inviting film professionals from various countries and GNFC partner organizations.

>> Dinara Maghlakelidze

C

This year GNFC had its pavilion at the Marche du Film market in Cannes for the sixth time.

The industry activities in the Georgian pavilion were performed by GNFC Director Nana Janelidze, Georgian representative in Eurimages Tamar Tatishvili, Head of GNFC Distribution and Exports Department Davit Vashadze and Project Manager Keti Danelia.

This was Nana Janelidze's first visit to Cannes in her position as GNFC Director. She held meetings with GNFC partners and representatives of various film organizations.

On May 17th a reception was held at the Georgian pavilion. Georgian filmmakers hosted foreign guests and talked about the shooting potential in Georgia as well as recent film events in the country.

Georgian producers Vova Kacharava and Noshre Chkhaidze took part in the Producers Network program. They were invited by the European producers' network EAVE and the Cannes Film Market with a special status.

As a result of cooperation between European Film Promotion and GNFC, the Georgian producer Zaza Rusadze was selected to take part in the PRODUCERS ON THE MOVE program.

GNFC returned from Cannes with several important initiatives:

In order to enhance the two-year cooperation between GNFC and CNC, Eric Garandeau's visit to Tbilisi was planned for July 2013. It was decided that the Director of CNC would present the French model of film support.

Negotiations were held regarding the visit of Eurimages' President Jobst Plog to Tbilisi in autumn 2013. Jobst Plog expressed his willingness to meet representatives of the Georgian film sector and various state agencies. Georgia became the 36th member of Eurimages in 2012, and in 2014 the meetings of the Eurimages Governing Board will be held in Georgia.

Negotiations are under way regarding the visit of the Governing Committee of the European Film Academy to Georgia.

GNFC started negotiations regarding membership of the European Audiovisual Observatory.

GNFC is continuing its cooperation with various film markets and co-production platforms, including the Berlinale Co-production Market, the Sarajevo Film Festival program Cinelink, and others.

The activities of the Georgian pavilion in Cannes proved that the key priorities of GNFC have remained unchanged. The priorities are still international cooperation, the establishment of links between Georgian and foreign film professionals and creating a favourable environment for the promotion of Georgian cinema worldwide.

T C I

Steven Spielberg, director, USA - Chair of the Jury.
Daniel Auteuil, actor, France.
Vidya Balan, actress, India.
Naomi Kawase, director, Japan.
Nicole Kidman, actress, Australia.
Ang Lee, director, Taiwan.
Christian Mungiu, director, Romania.
Lynne Ramsay, director, UK.
Christoph Waltz, actor, Austria.

C

Palme d'Or - Adelle's Life (Vie d'Adèle), directed by Abdellatif Kechiche, France. Diplomas were given to the main actresses –Lea Seydoux and Adele Exarchopoulos.
Grand Prize - Inside Llewyn Davis, directed by Ethan and Joel Coen, USA.
Best Actress - Bérénice Bejo (Le Passé), France.
Best Actor - Bruce Dern (Nebraska), USA.
Best Director - Amat Escalante (Heli), Mexico.
Best Script - Jia Zhangke (A Touch of Sin), China.
Jury Prize - Hirokazu Kore-Eda (Like Father, Like Son/ Tel père, tel fils), Japan.
Camera d'Or (Golden Camera) - Anthony Chen (Ilo, Ilo), Singapore.
Palme d'Or for Short Film - Moon Byoung-Gon (Safe), South Korea.
The prize in the section "Un Certain regard" - Rithy Panh (Lost Picture - Image manquante), France-Cambodia. This award was dedicated to the Iranian dissident director Jafar Panahi who has been banned from working in the film industry.
The Prize of the Ecumenical Jury was awarded to the Iranian Director Asghar Farhadi for his film The Past (Le Passé).
The FIPRESCI Prize was awarded to Abdellatif Kechiche's film "Adele's Life" (Vie d'Adèle).

P O

Only 7 French films have been awarded the Palme d'Or during the 66 years of the Cannes Festival:
1956: The World of Silence (Le monde du silence), directed by Louis Malle and Jacques Yves Cousteau
1961: Such Long Absence (Une aussi longue absence), directed by Henri Colpi, equal winner with Luis Bunuel's film "Viridiana", Spain
1964: Cherbourg Umbrellas (Les parapluies de Cherbourg), directed by Jacques Demy
1966: Man and Woman (Un homme et une femme), directed by Claude Lelouch
1987: Under the Sun of Satan (Sous le soleil de Satan), directed by Maurice Pialat
2008: The Class (Entre les murs), directed by Laurent Cantet
2013 : Adele's Life (Vie d'Adèle), directed by Abdellatif Kechiche.

P P

In 1955 the Grand Prize of Cannes International Film Festival was called Palme d'Or (Golden Palm). The first Palme d'Or was awarded to American director Delbert Mann for his film "March". The award lost its name in 1963 and regained it for a short period in 1975. The prize was finally introduced in 1980.

The Palme d'Or has been awarded to only one Soviet film – Kalatozov's The Cranes Are Flying in 1958. This prize is unique in a sense as the Soviet Union no longer exists.

C

Prior to the 66th Cannes Film Festival, Filmprint interviewed Joël Chapron, Head of the Central and East European Department of Unifrance, pre-selector of Central and Eastern European films for the Cannes and Locarno festivals.

F.P. The field of your activities – the selection of Central and Eastern European films for the Cannes Festival – also includes Georgia. Our country occupies a small space within this vast area. Let's discuss the countries in the area. The majority of them have joined European structures and this has resulted in changes in their film industry. What is the current direction of European cinema? What are the changes brought about by the new situation?

It is hard to generalize, especially in the case of separate countries with their specific national features. Take, for example, the Czech Republic: nobody knows anything about recent Czech films because they are rarely screened abroad. But the Czechs love their cinema and the share of national films in the Czech rental system is the highest in Eastern Europe. This matters a lot. It is wonderful to hear that Czechs are keen to attend screenings of their national films.

In Poland the situation is unstable. However, since the adoption of a new law on cinema in 2005, things are moving in the right direction. I think that current Polish cinema is developing rapidly, although, like Czech cinema, it is not widely recognized abroad. New Polish films are gradually winning market share both at home and at international festivals, where Polish directors are popular.

The situation is unstable also in Russia, where rapid political changes are affecting the film industry. It would be nice if Russia selected one concrete system of film financing and did not change it every 2-3 years. In any case, I think that Russian films are very interesting. We selected two Russian films for this year's festival: one is a debut and the other is a second film. I think that this is very significant.

In Romania the situation with regard to national films is rather weak. The

Photo: Latavra Dularidze

position of national films in the internal market is negligible. However, these films are well-known abroad. Romanian films travel to festivals, but are practically unknown in their own country.

The situation in Bulgaria is different: there have been few recent films. They are not screened either in the country or at festivals. In the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the situation is similar.

Thus, we cannot make general conclusions. There are grounds for optimism: some countries strive to offer national films to the local audience, others, like Romania, are festival-oriented. Every country tries in its own way to find a solution to problems in their film industry.

However, this year in Cannes there have been no films from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, with the exception of Russia.

F.P. But Russian films are not in the main competition. This is not full-scale participation.

This is better than no participation at all. There are two Russian films in Cannes, while there are no films whatsoever from Central and Eastern European countries. In any case, it is better to look at things optimistically.

I don't want to blame anyone, because each country has its strategy and viewpoints. I always bring up the example of the Czechs because they appreciate national films and this is the most important thing.

F.P. The Czech Republic played an important role many years ago when the film industry was destroyed in other countries. They retained the material base, the Barrandov studio, where filmmakers from other countries went to make films.

I agree, that's true.

F.P. In addition, the Karlovy Vary Film Festival plays a significant role in the Czech film industry. It is an authoritative traditional festival which has recently had a "new wind" despite numerous challenges in the film industry and the entire country.

The situation is different in this part of Europe. This can be proved by their participation in festivals.

F.P. What is the policy of the Cannes Festival with regard to these countries? Are there any preferences? How do you select films?

There are many questions around the selection of films. The answer is simple: there is no policy whatsoever. There are no preferences regarding any particular zone of the world. The committee frequently watches films without even knowing where they come from. We don't care about the country of origin. Some think it is obligatory to select Russian films. We don't think so. The quality of a film is decisive, not the country of origin.

No country is obligatory in the selection process. For instance, there are no German films in Cannes this year, although the Germans make lots of films and offer many of them to the Selection Committee. Thus, the Cannes Festival neglects politically correct attitudes or balance between countries and continents. I have already mentioned that this year we have selected two Russian films and not a single film from Eastern Europe.

F.P. Instead, there are many French films, which doesn't happen so often.

I agree. We don't think we have to select French films only because Cannes is located in France. Sometimes there are three French films, sometimes – six. It depends...

F.P. Georgian cinema has just started to overcome the crisis of the 1990s. The country has talented filmmakers of all generations, but there is a shortage of finances and there are many problems to overcome. The infrastructure was entirely destroyed in the 1990s. Another problem is the lack of information and Georgia's involvement in film processes worldwide. What are the prospects for Georgian cinema in this situation?

We hope things will move forward. It all depends on Georgia itself. In order to join cinematographic processes and space you have to promote national films. I think the Georgian National Film Center has made significant steps in this direction. This would have been impossible without strong political will. Of course, this does not mean that Georgian films will be in international competitions immediately. However, the activities of the Film Center have brought favourable results. There is co-production. I have seen joint films made in cooperation with France and Germany. Other films were made without co-production, i.e. only with Georgian financing. This gives grounds for optimism. Being able to produce 5-7 films instead of 1-2 is already an important step forward.

This year we invited the Caucasus to Locarno. I visited Tbilisi in connection with this. We have received 114 projects from the three countries of the South Caucasus. 12 projects will be selected for Locarno in August. Out of these, 5 or 6 are Georgian. The authors will have an opportunity to pitch their projects and find producers. All this is very important and confirms the progress of the Georgian film industry.

>> Latavra Dularidze

I

Amirani is an important film event, especially for students. This Festival is decisive for their further film career," says GNFC Director Nana Janelidze.

Every school year at Rustaveli State University of Theater and Cinema ends with the Amirani Student Film Festival Amirani. The festival is both a celebration and a great responsibility.

The university courtyard is full of students, media representatives and film professionals. Screenings and master classes are offered every day. Films made in different film schools around the world are screened, and the audience gets acquainted with current processes in youth cinema worldwide. Amirani allows us to make a comparative analysis of Georgian and foreign youth films. The festival's young participants gain significant experience and can assess their possibilities.

The story of the festival is special: it was established in 1978 upon the initiative of Tato Kotetishvili, Dito Tsintsadze, Nana Janelidze, Nana Jorjadze and Paata Iakashvili. From the very start it gained fame and became a significant event in the cultural life of Georgia. However, due to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the following crisis, the festival disappeared until 2007 when it was restored upon the initiative of the University of Theater and Cinema. Since then it has been held annually.

Amirani belongs entirely to the students. They present their works and take part in the competition. The students also organize the festival and work jointly on every detail.

Once Amirani was called the most free festival in the Soviet Union. Currently it attracts the attention of a large number of schools worldwide.

This year's Festival was exceptional with regard to the success of Georgian films.

Over the five days of the Festival, different attitudes and viewpoints represented in the films of various countries were reflected on the screen of the Film Club at the University of Theater and Cinema. The screenings of Georgian films attracted special attention. The hall was full to bursting and students watched films standing or sitting on the floor.

Against this background of the international diversity of the films, the Georgian panorama was outstanding. In the four main nominations, two prizes were awarded to Georgian films.

The Special Jury Prize was awarded to Zura Demetrashvili's Crossroads, while Zaza Nozadze's Merab Datukishvili was awarded the Prize for the Best Documentary.

"Georgians have exceptional imagination. Their films are so positive! I like them a lot!" says jury member Claudia Messer, scriptwriter and teacher of scriptwriting at Baden-Vurttemberg Film Academy (Germany).

Other jury members were Irina Roman-

chenko, Director of the Molodist Film Festival (Ukraine), Gunel Harley, film marketologist (Turkey), Leszek David, young director, teacher of Lodz Film School (Poland) and film critic Gogi Gvakharia (Georgia).

It is very important for the Festival to have an international jury. The members of the jury offer master classes and share their experience with students.

Amirani also has a student jury, which allows the students to gain a lot of interesting experience. Some students make films, others evaluate them. This is especially important because both sides form the future of Georgian cinema. This year the decisions of the adult jury and the student jury coincided. Soso Bliadze's film The Most Precious was the favourite of both the adult and student juries.

A special trademark of Amirani is its atmosphere, filled with energy, joy and student spirit. At the opening ceremony a student film by some famous Georgian director is screened. This year the opening film was Levan Zakareishvili's Father. Such screenings are a stimulus for students who are just beginning their film career.

One of Amirani's important projects is ONE SHOT MOVIE, which has been held for three years and consists in making a movie in a single shot. The aim of the project is to establish close links between Georgian and foreign students. They make a joint film and share their experience.

Taking into account what is mentioned above, it is not surprising that the festival awards mean a lot to students. Numerous awards have been won by Georgian films, but this year's festival was exceptional in this regard. Apart from the two main prizes and the Jury prize, a prize for best photography was awarded to Levan Sikharulidze's It Seems There Was Sea. Ketevan Nozadze, the art director of the short feature film The Swing of the Coffin Maker was the best in the given nomination, which was one more pleasant surprise.

This success by Georgian films was a very pleasant surprise even though the Georgian films really deserved it.

We can already make forecasts about the future career of the festival winners: Zura Demetrashvili, whose main characters – father and son – are on the "crossroads" of the generation gap; Zaza Nozadze, whose Merab Datukishvili proves that life in a wheel-chair does not differ much from life without one; Soso Bliadze and his lonely main character searching for "The Most Precious" and Levan Sikharulidze and his sad dream of the sea which seems to be there.

>> Khatia Maghlakelidze

D

Art is often the best way to establish links between people of different political and religious attitudes, different mentalities and nationalities. Although Georgia and Macedonia have much in common, the close links between these two countries are, above all, due to cinema. These two countries, which have both suffered a lot in the recent past, started to develop their national film industry in the same period. Both countries have worked hard to promote their films throughout the world and have established a close partnership and even friendship in recent years. Now both countries are members of Eurimages and are combining their efforts to achieve success at a number of festivals.

In 2011, a Days of Georgian Cinema event was organized in Macedonia in the Cinedays Festival. Recent Georgian films were screened and highly appreciated by the audience. This year, upon the invitation of the Georgian National Film Center, the Days of Macedonian Cinema was arranged in Tbilisi. On 2nd-4th April the Rustaveli cinema screened classic and contemporary Macedonian films. The guests of the event were Darko Basheski, Director of the Macedonian Film Fund, and Vladimir Blazevski, director of one of the most successful recent films Punk Is Not Dead.

The Director of the Macedonian Film Fund is a great supporter of Georgian cinema. He was one of the first to support Georgia's membership of Eurimages. We interviewed Darko Basheski on contemporary Macedonian cinema, the activities of the Macedonian Film Fund and its partnership with the Georgian National Film Center.

F.P. What changes has Macedonian cinema undergone since the Film Fund was established in your country?

We established this new institute with state support. Initially we had two strategies of obtaining the financing: the first was state financing and the second was co-production. Out of 21 co-productions made in the past years, the majority have received awards at international festivals. So we can conclude that Macedonian cinema has started to achieve success and will continue to be successful. I think cinema is the best way to promote a country. As an example, I could name Milcho Manchevski's Before the Rain, which turned out to be the best way to promote Macedonia worldwide. People who had hardly heard about our country got interested not only in Macedonian films but in the country itself.

F.P. Which was the most successful film financed by the Fund?

Vladimir Blazevski's Punk Is Not Dead was the winner of the Karlovy-Vary Film Festival. After this success the film was awarded more than 15 prizes at various festivals.

F.P. How did cooperation between the Macedonian Film Fund and GNFC start?

It started in 2009 when I met former Director of GNFC Tamar Tatishvili. Both Georgian and Macedonian films were unknown to the world at the time. They started to appear at various festivals in the same period. I frequently met Tamar Tatishvili at different film events. With time, our partnership with GNFC developed and friendly relationships were established. I am confident that these relationships will prove to be long-lasting.

>> Magda Gogolashvili

L

Every year Locarno – an Italian-French-German town in the Italian canton of Switzerland – hosts one of the major international film festivals. This is a place where the air is filled with joy and during the twelve days of the festival the town lives a festival life. Locarno is one of the most open festivals in the world. The main festival screenings are held in the open air, on the main square of the town Piazza Grande. There are no boundaries between real life and cinema and Locarno is open for young unknown creators and new, original works of art.

This year the main festival screen opened on a square packed with umbrellas, as it was pouring with rain. The first film was Baltasar Kormakur's 2 GUNS. Exactly ten years ago this director's debut film - 101 REYKJAVIK – was awarded a prize at Locarno Film Festival.

The competition program of the Festival was diverse and embraced low budget and high budget dramas and cinematographic studies. Some films were hard to watch, others were enjoyable.

In some cinemas and halls there played films by George Cukor and Verner Herzog… films that are timeless in their appeal.

The festival's Grand Prize - the Golden Leopard - was awarded to the Spanish-Portuguese film HISTORIA DE LA MEVA MORT (The Story of My Death). This is a film about "the beauty of horror and the horror of beauty; the injustice of beauty and the beauty of injustice..." In this film the age of Casanova ends and the age of Dracula begins.

A special Jury prize was awarded to the autobiographical film E AGORA? LEMBRA-ME (Now What? Remind Me). This film by Joaquim Pinto is also about the end or the expectation of the end. With documentary precision the director tells about a disease which is almost incurable.

The Prize for Best Direction was awarded to South Korean Hong Sang Soo for U RI SUNHI (Our Sunhi). Films by this director have been awarded prizes at a number of festivals, including Cannes. It appears that the prize in Locarno was awarded to the director not only for this particular film but also because he makes such original and different films.

The festival winner - HISTORIA DE LE MEVA MORT (The Story of My Death)
Director - Alberto Serra
Spain, Portugal;

Special Jury Prize -
E AGORA? LEMBRA-ME
(What Now? Remind Me)
Director – Joaquim Pinto,
Portugal;

Prize for Best Direction –
Hong Sang Soo
Film - U RI SUNHI (Our Sunhi),
South Korea;

Prize for Best Actress – Brie Larson
Film - SHORT TERM 12, USA;

Prize for Best Actor – Fernando Bacilio
Film - EL MUDO (Dumb),
Peru, France, Mexico;

Jury Prize for Best Debut - MOUTON
Director – Gilles Deroo,
Marianne Pistone, France;

Prize for Best Short Film - ZIMA,
Director – Cristina Picchi, Russia

Last but not least, the discovery and hero of the festival was GABRIELLA, which was awarded the Audience Prize. It is an extremely humane film about people who are different from others. In medical language each of them has a name, but beyond the diagnoses there is daily life, habits, wishes, sadness intermixed with joy and the gift of love.

Audience Prize - GABRIELLA
Director - Louise Archambault, Canada

O D

In addition to the competition program, world premieres and master classes, the festival includes the annual program OPEN DOORS, which traditionally focuses on a selected region. A winner is named from the selected projects and the festival awards projects it intends to support in the future. Through this program, the Locarno Film Festival opens doors for young unknown filmmakers, such as the young Kazakh director Emir Baygazin whose film "Harmony Lessons" was awarded the Silver Bear in Berlin. So winning in this program at Locarno can help achieve future success.

This year the focus of this program was the South Caucasus. As the director of the section Martina Malacrida mentioned, South Caucasian cinema is currently in the stage of independent development, which has aroused deep interest in South Caucasian films.

The halls were packed full for the screening of Georgian films. The section opened with Levan Zakareishvili's "Tbilisi, Tbilisi". The next film was Nana Janelidze's "Will There Be a Theater Up There?", followed by Zaza Rusadze's "A Fold in My Blanket" and Rusudan Chkonia's "Keep Smiling". All the films aroused great interest and received enthusiastic applause.

It would no exaggeration to conclude that this year's OPEN DOORS witnessed a victory for Georgian cinema. Out of the five projects to receive awards, four were from Georgia:

SEE YOU IN CHECHNYA _ Alexandre Kvatashidze's project was awarded two prizes _ OPEN DOORS PRODUCTION AWARDS and ARTE OPEN DOORS AWARD , Georgia;

SLEEPING LESSONS - Rusudan Pirveli and Lexo Chakhiadze, CNC AWARD, Georgia;

ABYSS – Oksana Mirsoyan - OPEN DOORS DEVELOPMENT AWARD, Armenia;

MADONA – Nino Gagua, OPEN DOORS POST-PRODUCTION AWARD, Georgia.

On the previous evening the main festival stage hosted an impressive award ceremony for Otar Iosseliani. The speech he made required no translation, just like his films...

>> Irine Zhordania

BIAFF 2013

" " –

Director of the Fistival
Giorgi Gogiberidze and
manager Zviad Eliziani

On September 15-22, 2013 Batumi hosted the eighth International Festival of Author's Films. The Festival was organized by Batumi Artists House Argani and Batumi City Council.

The Festival included feature, documentary and short films, as well as several non-competition sections: Georgian Panorama, Collection of Great Masters, Focus on the UK, The World of Music, as well as a collection of short films from the European Film Academy (SHORT MATTERS). The screenings were held at the Apollo cinema in Batumi. Open-air screenings were also held on Era Square. Master classes by producers, directors and script-writers were held at Batumi University of Arts and the Radisson Hotel. Participating films were evaluated by an expert jury:

Feature Film Jury: Marlen Khutsiev (Russia), Yeshim Ustaoglu (Turkey), Jim Stark (USA), Wieslav Saniewski (Poland), Lela Ochiauri (Georgia).

Documentary Film Jury: Andrzej Fidyk (Poland), Ruben Gevorkyanz (Armenia), Emel Celebi (Turkey), Anton Mazurov (Russia), Tinatin Gurchiani (Georgia).

Short Film Jury: Alexandre Rekhviashvili (Georgia), Mehmet Ali Arslan (Turkey), Rafi Movsesyan (Armenia), Margarita Kasimova (Belarus), Baadur Tsuladze (Georgia).

The Director of the festival was Giorgi Gogiberidze and the manager was Zviad Eliziani.

This year's Batumi Festival was compared to the Cannes Festival. This comparison was possible due to the brilliant festival organization, together with the pleasant environment of the seaside city. It all started in Batumi's Summer Cinema.

The Festival opened with a collage of participating films. Opening speeches were made by representatives of the local Achara authorities, Jury members and honorable guests of the Festival. Ruben Gevorkyanz presented a holy cross to the Festival. On the same day, famous film director Marlen Khutsiev and scriptwriter Rezo Cheishvili were awarded Honorary Prizes for their contribution to cinema.

The Festival opened with a so-called "promo" with Rezo Cheishvili, followed by Giorgi Danelia's "Ku! Kin-Dza-Dza" – a remake of his earlier film with a similar name. Against the background of these positive emotions, the one-week festival was declared open.

On the second day, the Vice-President of the Polish Filmmakers' Association Wieslav Saniewski presented Andrzej Wajda's film "Walesa – Man of Hope". This film was also entered in the Venice Film festival. Batumi is the third festival where this film has been presented.

The Jury members presented their own films: "Araf - Somewhere in Between" (Yeshim Ustaoglu, Turkey), "Winner" (Wieslav Saniewski, Poland) and "Machine Which Makes Everything Disappear" (Tinatin Gurchiani, Georgia). Despite being controversial, Gurchiani's film aroused great interest. The other two films also caught the interest of the festival guests.

The audience were looking forward

Stills from the films: "Fifth season" and " Fill the Void"

to seeing Joe Boyd's "Jimi Hendrix" (1973), which was screened twice. It was especially enjoyable to watch this film in the open air. This film, created by famous American music producer and writer Joe Boyd, is still very popular.

In Georgian Panorama, Merab Kokochashvili presented his "Cradle of Wine". Other films in this section were Dato Ujmajuridze's "Laguna Vere" and Gio Mgeladze's "No, Friend!" and "Imago Mundi".

Interesting films were presented in the section Focus on the UK. The collection of short films from the European Film Academy (SHORT MATTERS!) was distinguished by psychological films focusing on the issues of family and traditions, which is quite unusual for European films. As for British films, the most interesting one was Jess Benstock's "The British Guide to Showing Off". This director's films have received awards at numerous international festivals.

The competition program was divided into three sections and contained 43 films. Prizes were awarded to the following films: "Before Snowfall", "The Fourth Child" and "The Fifth Season". The audience highly appreciated a Russian film "The Geographer Drank His Globe Away" (by Aleksandr Veledinski). I think the main shortcoming of this film was the promotion of "supermodern" attitudes, which are still unacceptable for many people (a specific understanding of love, family, the environment, the generation gap, etc.). Despite this shortcoming, the film was reminiscent of old Russian films. While watching "Paradjanov" (directed by Serge Avedikian and Olena Fetisova) it was clear that the Best Actor prize would be awarded to Serge Avedikian, as he was extremely convincing in this role.

"The Fifth Season" attracted attention through its original dramaturgy and direction and was awarded the prize for Best Direction. However, special mention should also be made of the work of the director of photography (original photography was also a characteristic feature of another film "A Field in England"). "The Fifth Season" shows the life of a traditional village. Initially they neglect tradition, but when nature changes and time gets mixed up, they become fearful and end up as slaves of tradition. They perform a winter ritual and willingly commit an act of violence: they burn a man in the hope of a better future.

A number of films (features and documentaries) made use of puppets (e.g. the documentary film "The Man Who Made Angels Fly" directed by Wiktoria Szymańska). It seems the feeling of the unreal in the real world constantly accompanies the film directors. They make human life more mysterious by using puppets, although they also give a kind of unpleasant feeling. The audience feel that they are just a puppet in this universe.

Iranian Vahid Musayan's "Fourth Child" is a film which brings aesthetic pleasure. Against the background of severe reality – war, hardship, starvation – there are real human feelings. The ending proves the importance of the human mission on earth.

Stills from the films:
"Blood Brother" and "
Act of killing"

Mahtab Keramati brilliantly plays the role of a woman for whom the interests of other people are more important than her own interests. "I wish this country had peace and safety instead of wealth" – this phrase expresses the entire idea of the film (here mention should also be made of Turkish Asli Ozge's film "Lifelong" and its main actress Defne Halman).

As for Zaza Rusadze's "A Fold in My Blanket", it did not match the expectations of the Georgian audience as it created a feeling of confusion and insufficiency. The audience felt as though they were hanging in the air due to the illusionary world where dreams and reality are intermixed. Unlike Mari Janashia, the young actors (Tornike Bziava and Tornike Gogrichiani) acted well, but this film was not appreciated by the audience. The film by Iranian director Mohammad Shirvani "Fat Shaker" gave the most negative impression. Due to its unpleasant aesthetics, slow rhythm and poor dramaturgy, many people even left the hall. The film did not attract the Jury's attention either.

The winner of the festival was "Before Snowfall" (directed by Hisham Zaman), a joint production by Norway, Germany and Iraq. The film abounds in emotion, and the close-ups make it even more dramatic. The method of shooting, plot development and logical ending convey the integrity of the film, which tells the tragic story of the victims of oriental traditions. Tradition forces young Siar to kill his sister because the girl has abandoned her fiancé. In the search for his sister, Siar finds his own love and so feels unable to kill his sister. But he is killed instead. While crossing the border he gives away the names of contrabandists and revenge is severe. Although the film is a joint production, its content is entirely oriental: many people are victims of tradition in Asian countries.

There was not much controversy with regard to documentaries and short films. Apart from the winners, the public highly appreciated "English Teacher" (Nino Orjonikidze and Vano Arsenishvili). Bradley Nelson, a young South African, lives in a Megrelian village and discovers that nobody needs him there. He shares this problem frankly with his friends and the video-camera. He seems to be observing everyone around. Another frank confession is given in "Bad Boy – High Security Cell". A Polish bank robber aged 28 tells his story and shares his emotions. Having seen this film, many young people will stop thinking about easy ways of becoming rich. Freedom, humaneness, escape from loneliness – these are the main aims of the real or invented characters in these films.

In general, the films presented at the festival created the impression that the main focus of contemporary films is people and ideas.

"Warm your hearts... art is harmony and equality" - this is one of the most beautiful utterances in the winning film. And this was the general mood of the Batumi Film Festival.

>> Shorena Rostomashvili

D I

Unlike the feature film competition, this year interesting and high-quality films were presented in the documentary section of the Batumi Film Festival.

One example was Nino Orjonikidze's and Vano Arsenishvili's "English Teacher". The main character of this film is a young man trying to carry out a "linguistic revolution" in a village in Samegrelo. He tries hard to establish friendly relationships with the locals and teach English to their children, but his attempts are grotesque. The directors' observation and their objective attitude to the main character and his environment create an interesting picture. Although this film was not a festival winner and was overshadowed by other documentaries, the very fact that contemporary Georgian documentaries reflect our reality so well is important in itself.

The German director Hermann Vaske interviews Slavoj Zizek, Angelina Jolie, Goran Bregovic and Emir Kusturica to find out what "Balkan Spirit" is. The film focuses on the role of the Balkans in contemporary Europe and the impact of Western values in this region. The television aesthetics are so powerful in this film that it resembles a TV report.

The same can be said about the Polish film "Bad Boy – High Security Cell" directed by Janusz Mrozowski, who attended this year's Batumi Festival. He has created a series of documentaries about prison life. This film is a prisoner's confession to the camera, but despite the empathy for the main character, neither the theme nor the form is innovative. The director fails to go beyond the boundaries of a television film.

Another Polish director Victoria Szymańska, who emigrated from Nazi Germany to Sweden, tells the story of Michael Meske and his creations in "The Man Who Made Angels Fly". This film is of similar artistic quality to the above-mentioned ones.

Another interesting film – "Pipeline" by the Russian Vitali Minski – is a "peripheral portrait" of the legendary Trans-Siberian pipeline. The film reflects the hard life of people living along the pipeline, which supplies Europe with gas: dead fish caught in frozen rivers, church services held in railway carriages, dogs living in old washing-machines, the revival of Communist ideas.... Although the theme is not new and there is nothing original in the visual form, "Pipeline" is an academic documentary where the form is adequate for the theme and nothing is accidental. The only shortcoming of the film is its duration, which subtracts from the emotional charge of the film.

"Blood Brother" by the American director Steve Hoover is a debut documentary which is awarded the audience prize at every festival. The main character is an American tourist who travels to a village in India, where he spends five years with children infected with AIDS. This relationship makes radical changes in the life of the tourist as well as in the lives of the children who are awaiting death. The audience witnesses the process of the children's revival. The visual aspect of the film is original: music and video clips, warm colours, a form in complete contrast to the theme – these are the chief merits of the film.

One of the outstanding films in the documentary section, which was awarded a special Jury prize, was "Five Broken Cameras" by Emad Burnat. Last year this film was the winner at the Sundance Festival and was later awarded an Alternative Oscar.

The main character, the director, buys a camera in order to film the birth of his fourth child. Eventually he films the conflict between the Jews and Palestinians. Five cameras witness these facts and each tells a new story. The film is a kind of autobiographical documentary, reflecting life with a subjective camera, rehabilitating physical reality, observing the environment and one's own self. The camera becomes part of the person and vice versa.

The winner of the festival was "The Act of Killing" by Joshua Oppenheimer from the UK. The film was awarded the audience prize in Berlin in 2013 despite its controversial theme – the genocide in Indonesia in the 1960s, which killed more than a million people. The director abstained from interviews and carried out a dramaturgical experiment. The film is a mixture of real and staged scenes. From the beginning to the end we witness the metamorphosis of the main character (it took seven years to make the film) – the murderer repents his crime. Such a transformation in the main character is rare for documentaries. The director is often criticized for the large number of violent scenes in his film. But according to one of the Jury members, Tinatin Gurchiani, "the form of the film is worth it. The director wanted to show the world 'The Act of killing'. I think that this film is one of the most important works in contemporary documentary cinema."

>> Neno Kavtaradze

The 19th International Sarajevo Film Festival opened on August 16th and ended on August 24the with a triumph for Georgian cinema: three out of the five Hearts of Sarajevo were awarded to "In Bloom" by Nana Ekvtimishvili and Simon Gross,. This included the prize for Best Fim and a monetary award of 16,000 Euros, while the young actresses Lika Babluani and Mariam Bokeria were awarded Best Actress prizes with a monetary prize of 25,000 Euros. The film was also awarded the prize of the International Union of Art-House Movie-Theaters (C.I.C.A.E. Award).

Georgian films participated in the competition program of the Sarajevo festival for the first time this year. This victory was preceded by a two-year working process initiated by the Georgian National Film Center. Sarajevo is the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina with a population of half a million people and was founded in 1461 by the Ottomans. The city is divided into two parts by the river Miljacka, and the parts are connected by beautiful bridges. During the ten days of the festival the population adjusts to its rhythm and tries to create a pleasant environment for its guests. The Heart of Sarajevo festival was established in 1994 during the civil war. At that time this idea of Mirsad Purivatra was considered a dream. But in a city where everyone was thinking of death, a film festival was seen as the victory of life over death. Initially they started with 50 films. They gathered secretly, and stubbornly continued to watch films under the threat of bombing. Many buildings in Sarajevo still bear the traces of bullets. Some buildings still need to be restored. Evidence of the horrible three-year blockade is a 25km tunnel, connecting the airport and the city center. Soldiers managed to bring humanitarian aid into the city via this tunnel. On March 1st, 1992, armed Moslems killed a bridegroom and wounded a priest in front of an Orthodox Christan church. This was the reason for the civil confrontation which later grew into the war. An Orthodox church, a Catholic church, a Synagogue and a Mosque stand side by side as a confirmation of tolerance. People hate to recall those times. Nearly every family suffered a loss in the war. It was hard for Sarajevo to overcome the horrors of war. So a lot of people think that the film festival has helped the city a great deal.

52 countries with 201 films participated in the various forums and competitions of the 19th festival. We asked Mirsad Purivatra, the Director of the Festival, about the difference between this year's festival and previous ones. He answered

Directors of the film "In Bloom" Nana Ekvtimishvili and Simon Gross with young actresses Mariam Bokeria and Lika Babluani

"Above all, this year we had difficulties in finding sponsors. Therefore, we were unable to invite many stars. Last year we had Angelina Jolie, Jeremy Irons, Morgan Freeman and Juliette Binoche. This year we had fewer stars, but more films. There were 700 applications sent to our administration, and it was hard to select just 200 from these. The festival space has grown, a favourable working environment has been created. A festival is not just a competition or a screening. Professional meetings on the terrace are also very important. In this regard this Festival is special, as it embraces regional forums, involving private companies and funds in project financing, media forums, art-house films from all over the world, and so on. Thus, the festival is a very busy one. It is very important to support the development of regional cinema. With this aim and with the support of private companies, 100 small cinemas have been built and restored throughout the country.

The South Caucasus will be present at our festival for the first time this year. I am happy that Georgia is taking part in the main competition. We once worked very hard to attract the attention of the world to our films. Now you are in the same situation. It is important to find your own place in the European film family. We will be happy if our Festival helps you achieve this."

There are three main competitions within the Sarajevo Film Festival: a full-length feature film competition, with 9 participants this year; a short film competition with 10 films and a documentary film competition with 22 participants. Apart from the main competition, Sarajevo Film Festival embraces other programs: New Wave, the Children's Program, Special Project Youth Cinema, South Caucasian Cinema, Winners of Berlinale and Cannes Festival, retrospective of films from a representative of the new wave of Romanian cinema – Cristi Puiu. The Festival opened with a film of Oscar-winning Bosnian director Danis Tanovic "An Episode in the Life of an Iron Picker". This year the film was awarded the Silver Bear in Berlin. Special mention should be made of the open air screenings hosting 2500 spectators. These screenings included a meeting with the crew of the Arabian film "Omar", the premiere Woody Allen's new film by "Blue Jasmine", plus screenings of Spanish, Russian and British films. The Summer Theater in the center of the city was overcrowded during these screenings. They started at 9 pm and lasted until late at night. People living in the adjacent houses opened their windows and

watched the films. The halls where non-competition films were screened were also overcrowded. There were special screenings for the media and, of course, premieres of the competition films on the red carpet.

The program CineLink is an opportunity for young directors to offer their scripts, projects in development and films in production to producers and distributors wordwide and thus obtain support and financing. Georgia participated in this industry section with two projects: Tinatin Kajrishvili's "Brides" (currently in production) and Rusudan Glurjidze's "Other People's Home", financed by GNFC in the competition of debut films. This project also won Cinelink support: a prize and financing to the amount of 10,000 Euros. In the documentary section Docu Rough Cut Boutique, Eka Papiashvili's project "A Man from Midja" was awarded three prizes, including the monetary prize. Young producers and directors Keti Kalandarishvili and Levan Lomjaria participated in Sarajevo Talent Campus. This program was especially important for their professional growth. Special screenings entitled "The Georgian National Film Center Presents" offered Tinatin Gurchiani's documentary "Machine That Makes Everything Disappear". After its award at Sundance, this film aroused the interest of the public at large. This interest was also evident in Sarajevo. After the screening of the film there was an interesting meeting between the audience and the director.

The Main Jury Prize in the Short Film Competition was awarded to Romanian director Radu Jude for "Shadow of a Cloud". A Special Jury Prize was awarded to a Serbian film "Rabbitland" by Ana Nedeljkovic and Nikola Majdak. The Main Jury Prize for Documentary Film was awarded to Austrian Yuri Rechinski's "Sickfuckpeople", and the Jury's Special Prize was awarded to Serbian Marta Popivoda's "Yugoslavia, How Ideology Moved Our Collective Body".

The Chair of the Feature Film Jury was Oscar-winning director Danis Tanovic from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Members of the Jury were: Charles Tesson (Artistic Director of Film Critics Week at Cannes Festival, France), Cristina Mayer (director of photography, Germany), Uliks Fehmiu (Serbian actor) and Mirela Oprisor (Romanian actress). Interesting films were selected for the competition program: Romanian Corneliu Porumboiu's "When Evening Falls on Bucharest or Metabolism" (previous works of this director were screened at the festivals in Montpellier and Cannes), Doru Nitescu's "Karmen", Bogdan Mustata's „Wolf" (this director has also been awarded at numerous film festivals, special mention should be made of his film "A Good Day For A Swim", which was awarded a Golden Bear in Berlin in 2008 for Best Short Film), Bobo Jelcic's "Stranger", Dimitris Bavellas' "Runaway Day", Faruk Loncharevic's "With Mom", Daniel Hoesl's "Soldate Jeanette", Katarina Mukstein's " Talea" and Nana Ekvtimishvili and Simon Gross "In Bloom". A special Jury prize was awarded to Bobo Jelcic's "Stranger". Bogdan Diklic, the actor starring in the film, was awarded the Sarajevo Heart for Best Actor and a monetary prize. "In Bloom" received the award of Best Film. A replacement for the new wave of Romanian cinema – this was the informal name given by representatives of international funds and filmmakers to the success of Georgian films in Sarajevo.

The Tbilisi of the 90s: a gray environment, hardships, bread queues, starvation, civil war, violence, hopelessness, destroyed relationships, alienated teachers and pupils. Invisible walls between people, a murderer giving bunches of flowers, a boyfriend giving weapons. Well-structured dramaturgy, brilliant close-ups, emotional, vibrant main characters, rhythmical movements, well thought-out visual order, an unforgettable story that gives food for thought and analysis. A kaleidoscope of seemingly irrelevant details with deep layers underneath. A general concrete environment, which is dramatic and horrifying. The young characters of the film live in this environment and struggle for their lives and dignity.

Charles Tesson, Artistic Director of the Film Critics Week in Cannes: "I am amazed at the acting of the main characters. Lika Babluani and Mariam Bokeria are charming, vibrant and extremely talented. I am sure they will have a future in cinema. Special mention should be made of the film's dramaturgy: many problems appear on the background, but arouse deep emotions in the audience due to well thought-out details of environment and era. This is a huge success, especially taking into account that this is Nana Ekvtimishvili's first full-length film. I am happy that Georgian cinema is returning to the European film family. This is largely due to the Georgian National Film Center, which supports art-house films."

Danis Tanovich: "You should be proud of today's victory. The themes of the film are very close to us. The environment and the actors of In Bloom have captured our hearts. So it was not hard for the Jury to make its choice".

>> Nino Mkheidze

T - N -

T N I

This year the Nikozi International Festival of Animated Films was held for the third time. The opening film was Alla Churikova's "Nikozi 2008". Alla Churikova lives and works in Germany and also took part in this festival last year. This time she offered a film made in sand animation dedicated to the fifth anniversary of the Russian aggression in Georgia. The premiere of this film was followed by an exhibition of Tonino Guerra's paintings, brought to the Festival by his wife Lora Guerra and the President of the Tonino Guerra Association – Carlo Sanches. The exhibition was followed by the screening of an animated film "The Sower" (based on one of the fables of the Gospel). This film was jointly created by the pupils of Nikozi St. Alexandre Okropiridze School of Fine Arts. The involvement of children is one of the important parts of festival life. During the festival week children took active part in the various workshops. After training with foreign tutors, the children presented two plasticine animations - "Underwater" and "Trace".

This year's Festival included film schools from five countries (Russia, Germany, Belarus, Poland and Bulgaria), including the famous Se-Ma-For animation studio and the Serafinski studio from Poland, the Animos studio from Russia, the Dresden Short Film festival from Germany and the Sofia festival from Bulgaria. There was a retrospective of Russian director Andrey Khrzhanovsky. The programs of the Dresden and Sofia festivals were especially interesting. The Directors of these Festivals - Katrin

Kuchler and Nadejda Slavova - presented the recent winners of their festivals. The Georgian audience highly appreciated Russian Stepan Biryukov's animation "The Gifts of the Black Raven" (based on a Georgian fairy-tale). Another interesting film was Valery Ryabin's documentary about the generation of Russian animators of the 1980s and 1990s. The animators of this film discussed the problem of saving puppet animation against the background of commercial animation. One of the important events of the festival was a visit by the Director of the Dresden Short Film Festival – Katrin Kuchler. Apart from presenting the films of her Festival, she talked about exchange programs and participation of Georgian animators in Dresden festival events. According to Mariam Kandelaki, the German guests called Nikozi an anti-festival, meaning a festival without a competition, enabling the audience to get acquainted with different animated films and feel the creative atmosphere which is so different from that of other festivals. Nikozi 2013 closed with the premiere of an animation by Polish director Witold Gierz "Signum", showing revived figures from Altamira Cave created using an unusual technique – animation drawn on stone.

We interviewed one of the organizers of the Festival – director Gela Kandelaki...

F.P. How did the idea of the Festival come about three years ago?

The Reverend Isaiah, the Metropolitan of Nikozi and Tskhinvali, came to Nikozi and said he wanted to set up a school of fine arts for Nikozi children. The Reverend Isaiah is a painter-animator by profession and was one of my students. Naturally, he wanted to form a group of animation students at the school of fine arts. Animation was followed by painting and later a shadow puppet theater. Eventually, the St. Alexandre Okropiridze School of Fine Arts was founded. Reverend Isaiah had the idea to organize a festival in Nikozi. We are very grateful to Poland for the technical support. Currently negotiations are under way on updating the technical equipment of the Nikozi studio. We are keen to announce a competition for the best project. We will not pay any amount to the winner, who will live in Nikozi for free and have a studio, which is a very important thing for a real artist. And the winner will also have copyrights to their animated films.

F.P. Are you in charge of the selection?

The selection is being carried by the Reverend Isaiah and the staff of our studio Kvali XXI.

F.P. How important is censorship in the process of selection?

When films are screened at the Residence of the Bishop, this very fact serves as a filter. Frankly speaking, such "censorship" is favourable for the festival. The participating films are based on high spiritual values. Our main criterion is the idea of humanism implemented with high artistic quality.

F.P There is no competition at the festival. Is this a temporary stage? Will this be changed in future?

Three years ago when we held the Festival for the first time, Zbigniew Zmudzki, Head of the Polish Se-Ma-For Studio said that the Festival was great, but unfortunately had no future, because there it had neither competition nor commerce. But it has proved to be just the contrary. The number of participants has grown fourfold. Zmudzki himself visited our festival for the second time. All the participants are happy that there is no competition at the Nikozi Animated Film Festival.

F.P How did you manage to exhibit Tonino Guerra's paintings?

I invited Andrey Khrzhanowsky, a Polish friend of mine, to this year's Festival. Before coming he called to tell me that Tonino Guerra's wife Lora also wanted to come and arrange an exhibition of Guerra's paintings. Naturally, we were delighted by this initiative.

F.P Do you have any ideas for guests at future festivals?

Next year more film schools will be represented. We are already negotiating this with Italy and the Czech Republic. Out of the seven days of the 2014 festival, two days will be allocated to the screening of winning films from our friends' festivals. One day will be dedicated to the production of animated film schools, and the remaining for days will be dedicated to interesting and talented artists, both the young and the famous.

F.P. What was new in the festival this year?

Our Festival is a living organism. It is enriched every year. The echo of Nikozi 2013 will also go to Tbilisi and the other regions of Georgia. What is more important is that many famous animators are willing to cooperate with the festival and offer free classes to Nikozi children. Bulgarian filmmakers who saw "The Sower", an animated film created by Nikozi children, expressed their willingness to make a joint film with the Nikozi studio. The theme has already been agreed and the script development process is under way.

The Festival is important both for us and our foreign guests, whose wish is to hold the Nikozi Festival under the patronage of UNESCO in future. Our foreign guests are ready to serve as mediators between the Festival and UNESCO.

>> Neno Kavtaradze

Photo: Oliver Killig

K K

Director of the Dresden International Short Film Festival, first visited Georgia during the 3rd Nikozi International Animated Film Festival. She presented the best films from the competition and non-competition programs of her festival. The Dresden Festival was established by enthusiastic film amateurs in 1989, prior to the political changes. The audience was offered the opportunity to see films that had been prohibited in the former German Democratic Republic. Dresden Festival is one of the most demanding festivals in Europe today. About 2600 applications are submitted from all round the world for selection in the national and international competitions. The Festival had a special program last year presenting the work of Dimitri Takaishvili. "The Raven", "Pest", "Babilina", "Family", "Expectation" - these films took part in the Festival on the initiative of Mariam Kandelaki. Katrin Kuchler's visit to the Nikozi festival was also due to the efforts of Mariam Kandelaki.

F.P. What kind of films are presented at your Festival?

We chiefly focus on arthouse and short

auteur films, as well as the work of students. We offer a wide range of films including shorts, animation, experimental, documentary and short feature films.

F.P. Are short films commercially profitable in contemporary Europe?

Frequently short films are commercially profitable. However, the most important criterion for me is the artistic quality rather than commercial value. Short films are becoming popular worldwide. They are entered in various festivals. Every festival has its priority and focus: some are interested in experimental films, others - in documentaries, etc. Thus, the landscape of short films is diverse.

F.P. What are the current trends in shorts and animation?

It is impossible to speak of any trends, especially with regard to animation. There are also puppet movies and 3D animation. In Germany a number of well-equipped studios specialize in 3D. At some universities classical animation is taught. As for the trends regarding short films, the duration is increasing. Usually short films take the spectator directly into the middle of the story, without any preface. Some directors have to stretch the narration up to 30 minutes. However, we cannot speak of any international trends for short films.

F.P. Is it easier to make short films than features or documentaries?

In my opinion, shorts are the highest class. With little time and low budget you have to tell a good story. You have to be laconic and the dramaturgy should be built perfectly. Shorts are a fine way to implement experiments. The form itself gives more freedom.

F.P. Nowadays technical progress has changed many things: cinema has moved from film to digital production. Has classical animation been replaced by 3D?

Traditional animation, i.e. 2D, is taught at schools and studios. However, students are adapting to new technologies. They spend much time working on plasticine animation. Then they automatically move to computer technologies, which takes less time. We have a special program for traditional art-house animation. One of the partners of the Festival is the German Animation Institute which helps us select such films.

F.P. Which film schools do you cooperate with?

There are several major films schools in Germany: Wurttemberg, two schools in Berlin, Munich, Hamburg and Cologne. They send a lot of films every year. We cooperate closely and they are aware of our priorities. In addition to student films, the festival includes independent productions with the individual style of the director, actor, director of photography, etc. Film schools often impose certain restrictions on films, so that films made by beginner students are usually identical in style and aesthetics.

F.P. Has a Georgian film ever participated in the competition section of your festival?

Unfortunately no Georgian film has taken part in our competition so far. We have a huge selection pool, and Georgian directors may send their films. I hope next year we will have Georgian films in our competition. However, this is not based solely on my decision, as there are around 10 people in charge of the selection.

F.P. Just like every major festival, you have a Forum parallel to the competition section...

Our Forum is an exchange platform for young animators from all over the world. It is a longstanding tradition to invite young talents to Dresden to participate in workshops dedicated to concrete issues. This year we invited three Georgian students. I think these are the first steps, enabling them to meet international professionals and develop their skills. I hope my visit to Georgia is the start of active cooperation. The Nikozi Festival was a fruitful experience for me too: I saw different films and experienced an atmosphere which was very different from that of other festivals.

>> Neno Kavtaradze

Photo: Tako Robakidze

T ILI I INT RN TION L IL TI L

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This year the international competition section of the 14th Tbilisi Film Festival included ten films. Of these, six films were co-productions. The participating films were: Archil Kavtaradze's Disorder, Maria Saakyan's I Am Going to Change My Name, Yuri Bykov's The Major, Andrea Pallaoro's Medeas, Rufat Hasanov's and Elvin Adigozel's Chameleon, Maria Sadovska's Women's Day, Ignas Jonynas' The Gambler, Maryna Er Gorbach's and Mehmet Bahadir Er's Love Me, Peni Panayotopulu's September, and Erdem Tepegoz's The Particle.

This year's jury was comprised of Iranian director Samira Makhmalbaf, Georgian actor of film and theater Giorgi Nakashidze, cultural philosopher and film critic Mateusz Werner, Hungarian art director Laszlo Rajk and the Festival's honorary guest and Head of the International Jury, American director Michael Hoffman.

On December 7th, at the closing ceremony of the Festival, the jury named the winners of the international competition. The Golden Prometheus Grand Prize was awarded to Archil Kavtaradze's Disorder. The Silver Prometheus for Best Direction was awarded to the Turkish film The Particle. The Special Parajanov Prize for original aesthetic and visual approach was awarded to Andrea Pallaoro's Medeas.

Archil Kavtaradze's creative development since he made "Subordination" is clear. "Disorder" is a film with a complicated history, as its social context has changed several times. The shooting started in 2011 when no-one dared publicly discuss the question of torture in prisons. The director stated that he had to overcome numerous obstacles: first no-one spoke about this issue and later it was forgotten altogether. The film tells the story of a man who goes to prison after a road accident. Religious feelings are part of human existence, hence they are eternal and inherent in everyone. The executor who tortures people finally becomes a victim himself. "Disorder" is hard to watch, as it is based on a true story.

While watching "The Particle" by Turkish director Erdem Tepegoz I remembered Merab Mamardashvili's phrase: "Life is an effort to remain alive in the following period of time." "The Particle" is a film about a lonely struggling woman who rents a dilapidated house. She earns her daily bread to support her old mother

Giorgi Nakashidze, Laszlo Rajk, Mateusz Werner, Samira Makhmalbaf; Gaga Chkheidze; Michael Hoffman at the opening of Festival.

and disabled child. Unemployment equals death. She tries to start working in a factory. Her boss tries to rape her, the landlord throws her out of her flat – these are separate chains of her suffering. "The Particle" is not just a struggle for one's daily bread. It is a struggle for life and hope, which is the last to die. We always think that helping the poor is a problem for others. After the screening of the film there was a meeting with the director, who said that the film is based on real life and the prototype of Zeynep suffered the same problems as the main character of the film.

"Medeas" is a film about a family with five children. Their relationships are described against the background of village life. The film reflects the dichotomy of the family members and the search for self-identification with the world. "Medeas" is almost completely devoid of dialogues The cascade of picturesque and static frames makes the film a bit monotonous. Any phenomenon may be explained by the preceding event. The narrative of "Medeas" is based on this principle. One frame explains another, and these two explain the third. The family members are alienated, whereas the viewer is alienated from the drama of the film due to its meditative narration. Probably we should observe the vague ending of the film in just the same way as one of the characters listens to the sound of knocking, with his ear to the table.

Mention should be made of Ignas Joninas' "The Gambler". The film tells the story of the paramedic Vincentas, who works for the resuscitation ambulance. Vincentas invents an illegal game which involves betting on the lives of the patients, with the winner being the one who correctly predicts the life or death of the patient. In this inhuman world, money is king and a person who makes a deal with the devil is doomed to lose. In order to ensure that his beloved woman wins, Vincentas commits suicide, thus retaining his dignity. The woman enters the sea and seems to undergo a ritual of of initiation.

This year's festival was distinguished by interesting and diverse themes and concepts, as well as by talented acting. This is not surprising as the international competition is the most significant section of the Tbilisi Film Festival.

>> Levan Gelashvili

Photo: Tako Robakidze

T

Several articles have been published about the 14th International Film Festival in Tbilisi. The authors of these articles have been critical of the festival program as well as its organization. One may agree with them to a certain extent: for instance, the low quality translation of the films still remains a problem (resulting in both incorrect translations and poor Georgian). The opening and closing ceremonies are dull and could hardly be called ceremonies at all.

Nevertheless, we should be grateful to the organizers for the extremely diverse and interesting non-competition programs. For instance, this year the Georgian audience had an opportunity to see six films from the Cannes festival, five films from this year's Berlinale, as well as films screened at the festivals in Venice and elsewhere. The program of the festival's traditional section, the European Film Forum, was quite amazing.

Above all, mention should be made of Paolo Sorrentino's marvelous film "La Grande Bellezza", which is dedicated to Rome. It is an artistic canvas of decadent aesthetics, reflecting the glory and brilliance of the eternal city, so reminiscent of Federico Fellini's La Dolce Vita.

Another interesting film from this section was Francois Ozon's latest work Jaune & Jolie with the charming Marine Vacth playing a passionate girl of 17 who meets clients in a hotel and combines pleasure, easy money and her college studies. Allusions to classical films are also abundant in this film, such as Catherine Deneuve in Bunuel's Belle de Jour.

Gille Bourdos's fascinating film Renoir reflects the last period of the great painter's life and tells about the love of the painter's son, famous director Jean Renoir, and a charming model.

Another interesting film was Chicken With Plums, directed by France-based Iranian filmmaker Marjane Satrapi in cooperation with Vincent Paronnaud. With the simplicity and wisdom of an oriental tale, the film tells the story of a talented musician who loses interest in life when his wife breaks his favorite violin.

Mention should be also made of the Romanian film Child's Pose, which was awarded the Golden Bear and the Prize of the International Association of Film Critics at this year's Berlinale. The director Calin Peter Netzer follows the tradition of "Romanian Realism" and tells about the complicated relationships between mother and son.

Gia Abuladze, Nana Janelidze and Goga Khaindrava; Gaga Chkheidze, Archil Kavtaradze; Eliso Sulakauri and Levan Koghuashvili

Other films in the European Film Forum were the Danish historical drama "A Royal Affair" by Nikolaj Arcel, the sentimental Belgian drama "The Broken Circle Breakdown" by Felix Van Groeninger, the Swedish family drama "Blondie" by Jesper Ganslandt, the Polish film "ELLES" directed by Malgorzata Szumowska in France, starring Juliette Binoche as a journalist who investigates prostitution issues, the Italian criminal story "Salvo" by Fabio Grassadonia and Antonio Piazza, and, of course, "In Bloom" by Nana Ekvtimishvili and Simon Gross.

The above list proves how interesting and diverse the Tbilisi Festival was this year, especially the European Film Forum section.

>> Archil Shubashvili

Photo: Tako Robakidze

T

As usual the 14th International Film Festival in Tbilisi gave the audience the chance to get to know the best contemporary German films. Made in Germany is one of the favorite sections with the audience and is traditionally supported by the Tbilisi Goethe Institute. This year the festival also celebrated the 50th anniversary of the world-famous German film organization - the Independent Institute of Film and Video-Art (Arsenal)– with the screening of Walter Ruttman's "Symphony of a Great City". The screening was organized in cooperation with the State Archive and the film was accompanied by live music performed by Junis Martins. The founders of Arsenal – Erica and Ulrich Gregor – were also members of the jury of Georgian Panorama.

With its diverse program, Made in Germany attracted a great deal of audience interest.

Margarethe von Trotta's latest film "Hannah Arendt" and Jan Ole Gerster's "Oh Boy" were the section's outstanding films. Other interesting films were David Sieveking's documentary "Forget Me Not", Doris Dorrie's "Bliss", Georg Maas' "Two Lives" and "Vampire Sisters" by Georg Gross. The film is about a family where the mother is human, the father a vampire and their twin daughters are half-vampires. The children have to adjust to a human way of life in a new environment.

The main character of "Oh Boy" is Niko, aged 30. His future is still uncertain. Humorous narration and the comic and tragic situations in his life form the

satire of the film. The people around Niko are often unsuccessful. What lies in store for him if he does not change his life? In this debut film the director creates an impressive portrait of a person living in the modern metropolis of Berlin.

As for Margarethe von Trotta's main character Hannah Arendt, she is a real person – a famous philosopher and politologist. The film focuses on an important stage in her career: her newspaper articles about one of the organizers of the Holocaust– Adolf Eichmann - shocked the world. According to Hannah Arendt, Eichmann was not a monster but a hard-working bureaucrat who treated his tasks with great responsibility. That is why he lacked a feeling of guilt. Hannah Arendt's take on the banality of evil explains the mechanisms of totalitarianism and is still very popular.

>> Khatia Maghlakelidze

L

R

For over ten years the Tbilisi International Film Festival has been a major event in the city's cultural life. Its diverse sections enable film-lovers of all generations to get acquainted with recent Art House films, meet interesting and outstanding filmmakers and share their professional experience.

The 14th Tbilisi Festival held in 2013 offered the audience a special section Love is a Basic Human Right. The main themes of this section were tolerance, human rights, self-identification, stereotypes regarding minorities and the complexity of their integration into traditional patriarchal society. These issues are still of vital importance for Georgia, especially after the events of May 17th.

The section opened on December 3rd with "Alata" by US director Michael Mayer. The film is about a dangerous love affair between a Jewish lawyer and a Palestinian student. Naturally, they face problems in the non-tolerant, prejudiced and hostile Palestinian and Israeli societies.

"Eastern Boys" by French script-writer and director Robin Campillo was first screened at the Venice International Film Festival. The film is about a gang of youngsters at a railway station. One of the members of this gang has a relationship with a middle-aged French man. The main themes of the film are youth prostitution and the complexity of integrating illegal immigrants into Western society.

Photo: Tako Robakidze

Estonian director Ilmar Raag tells the story of the emancipation of a young girl Kertu. Her love for the villager Vilu allows the girl to escape from the influence of her tyrant father and fight for her happiness.

Xavier Villaverde's "El Sexo De Los Angeles/Angels' Sex" (Spain, 2011) is a contemporary version of Francois Truffaut's "Jules et Jim". With light and original humour the director explores the difficulties of love affairs and the selection of partners.

An earnest diploma work by young German director Sarah-Judith Mettke "Transpapa", 2012, focuses on teenage problems and reflects the relationships between the two generations with convincing and refined humour. Teenager Maren meets her artistic transsexual father, who has been lost for years.

Marcel Geissler's family drama "Rosie" focuses on the secrets of a family and relationhips with parents. The film tells about the trips of a Berlin-based writer Lorenz Meran, who frequently visits his mother Rosie in a small town in Switzerland. With fascinating tenderness and irony, Swiss actress Sibylie Brunner expresses the fear of an old-aged person about losing personal freedom. In comparison with Rosie, who has outstanding and powerful personal qualities, the main character of the film seems dull and stereotypical.

Another outstanding film in the section was "Adele's Life" directed by Abdellatif Kechiche – a French director of Tunisian origin. The film was awarded the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 2013. The screening of this film in Tbilisi was a precious gift for the Georgian audience. The emotional, realistic and explicit frames of the film tell of a strong and passionate love and the complex process of searching for one's own self. In a detailed and convincing manner, the director describes the painful moments of becoming an adult. The film's principal actresses – Adele Exarchopoulos and Lea Seydoux – certainly contributed greatly to the film's success.

>> Dinara Maghlakelidze

P

In comparison with previous years, the Georgian Panorama section of the Tbilisi International Film Festival was diverse, challenging and apolitical. Each of the 16 participant films attempted to focus on a certain problem and bring it to the audience, some in an artistic way, others simply by presenting the facts. As a whole, the panorama proved that Georgia has a talented generation of young directors.

The program of Georgian Panarama consisted of one full length feature, ten shorts, four documentaries and one animation film. Special mention should be made of the documentaries: Levan Adamia's "I am a Little Georgian", Shalva Shengeli's "The King", Lia Jakeli's "Mum, Dad, I'm Gay" and Giorgi Chalauri's and Toma Begiashvili's "Project Nateli".

Levan Adamia deals with the theme of people of restricted growth - which is so rarely discussed in films either in Georgia or elsewhere. These little people appear only in episodes of some films, but no one takes an interest in their lives. The director vividly expresses the complicated nature of these people, their feelings, troubles and hopes. The key message of the film is that, although these people are non-standard, they are adult persons with their problems and trials. The only career for them seems to be the circus or stage. Legislation ignores their needs and the state refuses to finance their projects. The final scene of the film fills us with hope that some day they will achieve their aims and the government will start to take an interest in their problems.

Lia Jakeli's film "Mum, Dad, I'm Gay" focuses on a theme that has been a taboo in Georgia. With her bold declaration the director proves that Georgian society either reacts aggressively to this issue or neglects it entirely. Society has to recognize that people from the sexual minorities are ordinary citizens who love, feel, suffer and enjoy things in just the same way as others do. The film describes the events of May 17th, 2013. In parallel, three representatives from the sexual minorities speak openly about their problems.

Shalva Shengeli's "King" tells an absurd real story about the statue of Stalin in Tsromi village in the Kartli region. The villagers face a dilemma as to whether to keep the statue in place or remove it

Nino Anjaparidze; Giorgi Nakashidze; Mateusz Werner and Michael Hoffman

because a monastery is being built there. The director is neutral, but describes the problem with light irony. The local residents prefer to keep the statue because it reflects the country's history. They never think about Stalin's personality and are just focused on the statue itself.

Short films have played a special role in the history of Georgian cinema. Beginning in the 1960s, Georgian directors have created masterpieces in this genre. Young contemporary directors share their experience. This year's Tbilisi festival included several interesting short films, for instance, Irakli Chkhikvadze's Garden with Bullets. Using black and white film and a minimalistic style the director shows the despair of the 1990s, which to a certain extent still continues. The characters in the film only change in their appearance, but the seal of despair is still apparent.

"Happy Meal" is Kote Takaishvili's second film. It is a drama about a poor family supported by a mother who walks around begging in the street. Unfortunately, such families are not rare in current Georgian reality.

The festival also presented five shorts made in the framework of the TBC Bank project. Out of these, special mention should be made of Zurab Demetrashvili's "Crossroads". The film reflects the permanent problem of the generation gap. The black and white images make the conflict more expressive. The film inspires the empathy of the audience from beginning to end, and this is largely due to the talented acting on display.

Marika Lapauri's "Spectator Spaces" is about a famous German-speaking writer and thinker Givi Margvelashvili. In the film he reads his philosophical essays in German, whereas the director attempts to visualize the essays and draw a portrait of the writer. Unfortunately the experiment is not successful and many people left the hall during the screening. The film gives the impression of being a compilation.

Georgian Panorama is an interesting and impressive event which has proved that Georgian cinema certainly has a future.

>> Ketevan Japaridze

Photo: Tako Robakidze

T T

In autumn Batumi hosts two film festivals: one is the Festival of Auteur Films and the other is the Tofuzi Animation Film Festival. After BIAFF, which takes place at the end of September, it is the children's turn and for them the animated characters presented at Tofuzi are the most important event. The Festival has already been running for five years. It is organized by the Animation Development Fund and the Personage Cultural Center. Tofuzi is a large-scale festival which also includes educational functions.

The festival includes master classes, workshops, meetings with writers and winners of the 2012 festival, etc. This year the festival will be held simultaneously in Batumi, Kobuleti and Khulo. The competition and information programs cover 115 films from 43 countries. This means that the Festival is of interest to many countries and people and the number of guests and participants is increasing every year. This is due to the fact that Tofuzi is not just a festival held in Batumi on 2nd-5th October. Its influence extends throughout the year in the whole of Georgia and the term "Echo Tofuzi" speaks for itself.

In 2013 the Echo included 15 regions (Zugdidi, Khobi, Poti, Ozurgeti, Kutaisi, Chiatura, Sachkhere, Borjomi, Akhaltsikhe, Gori, Tbilisi, Dusheti, Rustavi, Telavi and Kisiskhevi). The project is still continuing and Echo Tofuzi will visit three more regions. The project includes screenings of the best films from the Tofuzi competition, as well as animated films which won awards at a number of festivals. The project also involves master classes, meetings and educational events. Attendance is free and so anyone who is interested can take part in Echo Tofuzi.

Animation is above all of interest to children and young people, as it affects their mentality and consciousness, and so the festival's main target audience is children. The Animation Development Fund has established studios in Tbilisi, Zugdidi and Telavi. Children are taught the structure and editing of animation film, which is very important for them, especially in the regions. The studios foster an interest in animation and the children have the opportunity not only to watch but also to create animated films. The project also unites the younger and older generations, who work together and share their experiences. Every step and project, every studio and every new region is a stepping stone to the revival of animation in Georgia. The Tofuzi festival is a summary of the year's work and, what is most important, it promotes Georgian animation worldwide.

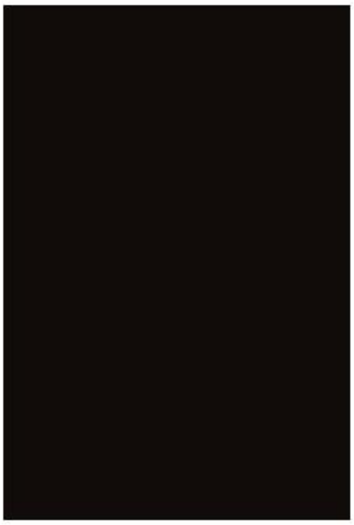
The festival has numerous foreign guests. This year the President Palace Hotel hosted a meeting with the authors of winning films from Tofuzi 2012. One of them – Laura Tuttelberg – is from Estonia. She was awarded the Grand Prize for her film Fly Mill, a short puppet film with a large number of characters and several subject lines. The main aim of the master class was to share the experience of this talented director. The festival had three more Estonian guests. Last year's best script award winner Hardi Volmer (for the film Domestic Fitness) gave a master class entitled How and Why Should We Make Live Creatures Move? Another guest was Max Hattler (Germany), the director of the animated film Shift, which won the award for the best experimental film last year. The festival's Bulgarian guest was Radostina Nakova, who won the award in 2012 for the best debut film with the film Trip. It is hard to say which meeting was the most interesting. Each of the guests shared interesting personal experiences. Apart from giving master classes, the guests served another important function: they were jury members at Tofuzi 2013 alongside the Georgian film director Zaza Khalvashi, who is also a professor at the Batumi Univeristy of Arts.

In addition to the international jury, the festival had a children's jury, which judged films in Khulo, Batumi and Kobuleti. The results of the competition were announced at the awards ceremony. The Grand Prize and the Prize for the Best Children's film was awarded to a Russian director Stepan Biryukov for The Raven's Gift. Prizes for the Best Script and Best Direction were awarded to French Bastien Dubois for the film Cargo Cult. Georgian Petre Tomradze was awarded the prize for the Best Film Created by Children for his film Heart.

Apart from the competition screenings, the French Institute and Tbilisi's Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center presented films in the format Open Air Cinema, allowing the audience to view the best works of contemporary cinema.

Tofuzi 2013 ended on 5th October in Batumi. But the Animation Development Fund will continue implementing educational programs throughout Georgia.

>> Khatia Maghlakelidze



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Cinedoc Tbilisi 2013 – the first international Caucasian documentary film festival in the South Caucasus – was organized by the Noosfera Foundation on October 15-20, 2013. The festival was a significant event for the Georgian cinema.

The festival was supported by Movies That Matter/Amnesty International, the IDFA Berta Fund (International Documentary Film Festival – Amsterdam), the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation, the Goethe Institute – Tbilisi, Institute Francais, Tbilisi City Council and the Georgian Ministry of Culture and Protection of Monuments.

Documentary films of diverse genres and styles were presented in the four sections of the festival.

The international competition comprised 10 films, Focus Caucasus included 8 films, Georgian Panorama presented documentaries which were made in the past decade and were mostly unknown to the public, whereas the children and youth section CineDOC Young offered a special program aimed at screening documentaries for children and the involvement of children in the educational activities.

The Festival had two professional juries: the jury of the international competition consisted of Paul Pauwels (Belgium), Tue Steen Mueller (Denmark), Victoria Belopolskaya (Russia), while the Focus Caucasus jury consisted of Petr Kostorhyz (Czech Republic), Lela Ochiauri (Georgia) and Marina Drozdova (Russia).

The festival also included master classes, workshops and round table discussions facilitated by European experts and tutors. The issues under discussion included the format of creative documentaries, the development of documentary filmmaking in Georgia and the South Caucasus, contemporary methods of cooperation between television channels and documentary filmmakers, etc.

A conference dedicated to cooperation and networking between the Caucasian countries was arranged within the framework of Focus Caucasus. Filmmakers and media representatives from the South Caucasus, Turkey and Russia participated in the round table discussions.

The winners of the first international documentary film festival in the South Caucasus – were the following films:

Best Film – Igrushki (Toys) – directed by Lina Luzyte, Lithuania.

Special Jury Award, Phnom Penh Lullaby directed by Pawel Kloc, Poland

Jury Mention - Utro/Morning - directed by Iulia Panasenko, Russia

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Best Documentary Film - The English Teacher, directed by Nino Orjonikidze and Vano Arsenishvili, Georgia

Jury Mention - Once Upon Another Time, directed by Alexandr Baev, Georgia

Focus Caucasus Jury Mention - Overtime, directed by Gurcan Keltec, Turkey

The CINEDOC TBILISI Public Prize was awarded to Songs of Redemption, directed by Amanda Sans and Miquel Galofre, Jamaica/Spain.

>> Dinara Maghlakelidze

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Photo: Tako Robakidze

The Niamori Film Festival was established in 2004. Despite numerous obstacles, it has continued until today. Although similar festivals are held in many countries, adventure films are not popular in Georgia. In the middle of the 20th century Igor Kreps made films about Georgian mountain climbers. This director has contributed a great deal to the creation of an archive of Georgian mountain climbing. Half a century later the journalist Tamuna Jishkariani established the Festival of Extreme Television Films. Despite challenges, she has led the Niamori Film Festival for 10 years. In order to arouse public interest Niamori is held in several stages: in addition to screenings, it includes photographic and literary competitions, as well as skiing competitions for media representatives. Foreign participants have also contributed greatly to the success of Niamori.

FP: How did the idea for the festival arise and how did you manage to realize it?

It was rather hard to realize my idea. Almost nobody was interested in it. However, the Irao studio used to make films on this theme, although the public broadcaster showed these films at an hour when nobody watched them. The interesting fact was that films made by Georgian mountain climbers won awards at festivals in Russia, Italy and Canada. At that time I was a journalist and made reports about their success. That is when I became interested in mountain climbing and extreme sports. However, it took 4 or 5 years from having the idea to its realization.

Thanks to the kind assistance of the Georgian mountain climber Beno Kashakashvili I started the festival up in 2004. The first participating films were made by the Irao studio. We screened films made by Beno Kashakashvili, Bidzina Gujabidze and the young mountain climber and director of photography Nika Lebanidze. Representatives of Georgian television's Channel 2 also helped me.

The first festival proved that there is an interesting profession known to the public only from films and photos.

FP: Many foreign documentary filmmakers are interested in your festival. How did you manage to attract their interest and which countries are interested in taking part?

Thanks to Beno Kashakashvili we managed to establish contacts with an Italian club CAI-Bergamo and met Silvio Calvi who knew a lot about Georgia and was willing to assist our climbers. He published a catalogue of Vittorio Sella's photos and presented a project about Svan towers to the Italian audience. He gave us the contacts of various documentary filmmakers worldwide and sent us climbing films made in Bergamo. The organizers of a Bulgarian Alpine Festival – Ana and Peter Petrovs - also got interested in our festival. They sent recommendation letters to documentary filmmakers and got them interested in our festival. In these 10 years the festival has invited participants from over 20 countries, including Brazil and South Africa. The most active participants are the representatives from Italy, USA, Austria and Russia. They send competition films every year.

FP: It is not easy to organize an annual festival. What were the challenges in previous years?

It was like a Bermuda Triangle. In other countries, similar festivals are supported by both the government and the private sector. We turned to the Ministry of Culture, and it forwarded our request to the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Economy as they thought it was not their job to assist us, even though the archives created by Kreps are important records in the field. The photo series by Guram Tikanadze is a masterpiece of Georgian photographic art, Guram Rcheulishvili was crazy about mountains. Yet, according to the Ministry of Culture, mountain climbing had nothing to do with cinema, photography and literature and so they were not interested in our festival. The Ministry of Sports is the only agency supporting our festival and the Ministry of Culture still ignores us today.

FP: This is probably due to the fact that non-professional filmmakers usually take part in the festival. In any case, Niamori has become popular and many youngsters have been inspired to make films and take photographs dedicated to mountain climbing. Has any famous director participated so far? Are you willing to organize a panorama, including Merab Kokochashvili's film "The Summit"?

The audience may not be familiar with directors who create films on the Alpine theme. However, the events reflected in their films are very important. In 2005 we screened an Italian film "K–2-Chogori" which was awarded the Grand Prize at our Festival. It is a full length documentary created in 1954 about the ascent to one of the most challenging mountain peaks in the Himalayas. Later, an American director Martin Campbell made the film "Vertical Limit" reflecting the challenges of climbing this mountain. Another American director Joseph Spaid brought his film "Kiran Over Mongolia" to our festival and was awarded the Grand Prize. Apart from the abovementioned high budget films, I would like to mention a low budget Georgian documentary "Their Helicopter", directed by Salome Jashi, who is already a very popular director.

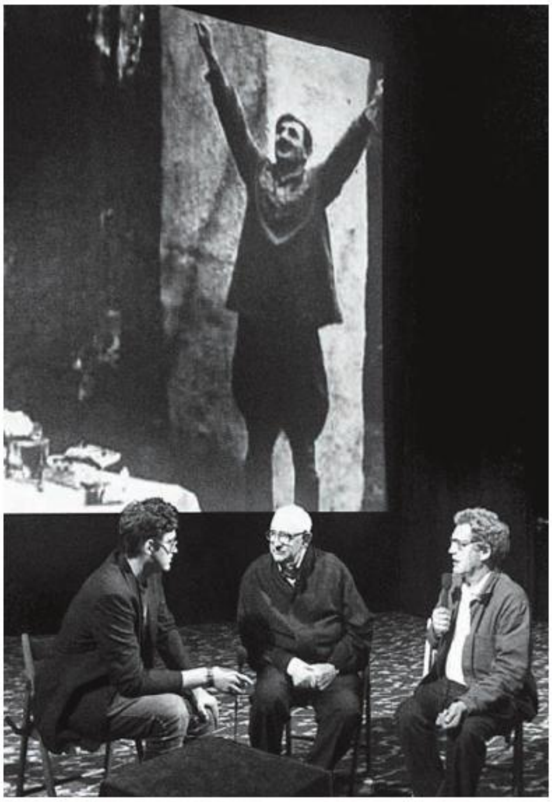
FP: There has been no competition at Niamori during the past two years. What is the reason and how did you manage to fill this gap?

There are numerous reasons, including the present political situation. In the past there was at least some interest in mountain climbing films and photography. Recently they have ignored Niamori completely. Despite the crisis in the private sector, they managed to assist us in some way. However, my colleagues shared my optimism. The festival focused on a photogaphic exhibition and there were premieres of several Georgian documentaries. The festival space was smaller this time. In previous years it was held in the hall of our permanent partner Cinema House, and we were supported by the Deputy Chairman of the Filmmakers Union, Archil Shubashvili. This time, thanks to Lika Mamatsashvili, the Karvasla Hall hosted several photographic exhibitions, including the photos of the Italian traveller, scientist and photographer Vittorio Ronchetti taken in Georgia in 1906-1913. Silvio Kalvi sent us these photos and asked us to identify the places shown in them. The idea of the exhibition was supported by the Italian Embassy in Georgia.

FP: Your festival has gained fame both in Georgia and abroad. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the festival.

Niamori is highly appreciated in certain circles. Many young people are interested in taking part: they study photography and film direction. However, these youngsters are not professionals yet, and this is obvious from their works. If we manage to obtain financing, we will organize master classes for them within the framework of the festival. We had planned this year's festival in May, but many of the participants were going on expeditions, so we postponed it for winter. As this year is the tenth anniversary of the festival we have selected ten films. The screening will be organized in partnership with The National Center of Children and Youth. There will also be a retrospective of the films that have won awards at Niamori over the past decade. An exhibition of the best photos from previous years will also be arranged. Unfortunately, due to lack of finances, we are unable to publish the festival catalogue this year. We intend to change the festival format in future and to increase its scope and its range of themes. I am interested in turning Niamori into a festival of sports films.

>> Ketevan Japaridze



R L

On 28th September – 2nd October 2013 the Third Festival of Georgian Films was held at the Riverside Studios in London. The title of the festival was "Life Reflected in Cinema" and it was organized by the British-Georgian Society.

"Riverside Studios" is one of the leading art centers in London and includes a 200-seat cinema. The audience had the chance to watch the best Georgian feature, documentary and short films, both recent and classical.

The Festival included several premieres. In addition, the Rich Mix Cinema in the East End of London organized a special evening with a screening of the Georgian silent masterpiece "My Grandmother" (Kote Mikaberidze, 1929), accompanied with a live performance by Georgian musicians.

Eldar Shengelaya's 80th birthday was celebrated at the Festival. The event was organized by Georgian Embassy and the Georgian diaspora in the UK.

Another important event was the meeting with Kakhi Kavsadze. After the screening of Nana Janelidze's documentary dedicated to Kakhi Kavsadze, an exhibition of photos of this famous actor was arranged at the Nati Gallery. The exhibition was organized by the gallery owner Natia Abramidze-Kelly.

The festival also included a discussion of the role of women in Georgian cinema focusing on the career of female Georgian directors.

L L -

The Third Festival of Georgian Films in London – "Life reflected in Cinema" – surpassed all expectations and demonstrated the revival of Georgian cinema. The crisis of the past 20 years is over and we are witnessing the start of a new life. I would like to highlight Levan Koghuashvili's Street Days. After seeing this film, I wrote that Georgian films could achieve worldwide success if modern Georgian cinema followed this path of frankness and truth. In these three years we have witnessed an unprecedented, rapid development in Georgian cinema. We have seen five films that any developed country would be proud of - the films by Tinatin Gurchiani, Rusudan Chkonia, Nana Janelidze, Giorgi Levashov-Tumanishvili and Keti Machavariani.

The screenings took place at Riverside Studios and the Dash café at Rich Mix. The audience was delighted with the new vision in Georgian cinema. The films taking part bore the mark of our diverse cinematographic tradition, which started in 1907 when Vasil Amashukeli filmed oil deposits in Baku and thus formed the basis for the development of cinema in Georgia. The Festival opened with this five-minute film. The masterpieces of Georgian cinema screened at the festival were Kote Mikaberidze's My Grandmother, Nutsa Ghoghoberidze's Buba, Davit Rondeli's Lost Paradise, Otar Iosseliani's There Was a Singing Blackbird, and Eldar Shengelaya's Unusual Exhibition. In recent decades Georgian films failed to reflect current reality or influence society. Now we are witnessing a miracle: the films made in recent years give rise to thought and self-reflection. They are not just good films, they are touching and understandable to people worldwide and this was evidenced by the reaction of the London audience . It should be mentioned that although the films presented at the festival were made on a comparatively low-budget, their power is astonishing. It would be a shame if a country with such talented directors, actors and musicians did not have the financial means to develop its film industry. It would be stupid not to value this potential and resign films only to the modest budget of the Georgian National Film Center. The time has come for the state to declare filmmaking as a priority. A film support foundation should be established with a several million dollar budget and producing at least ten films per year. Georgian cinema is worthy of having a reliable sponsor.

>> Ketevan Japaridze

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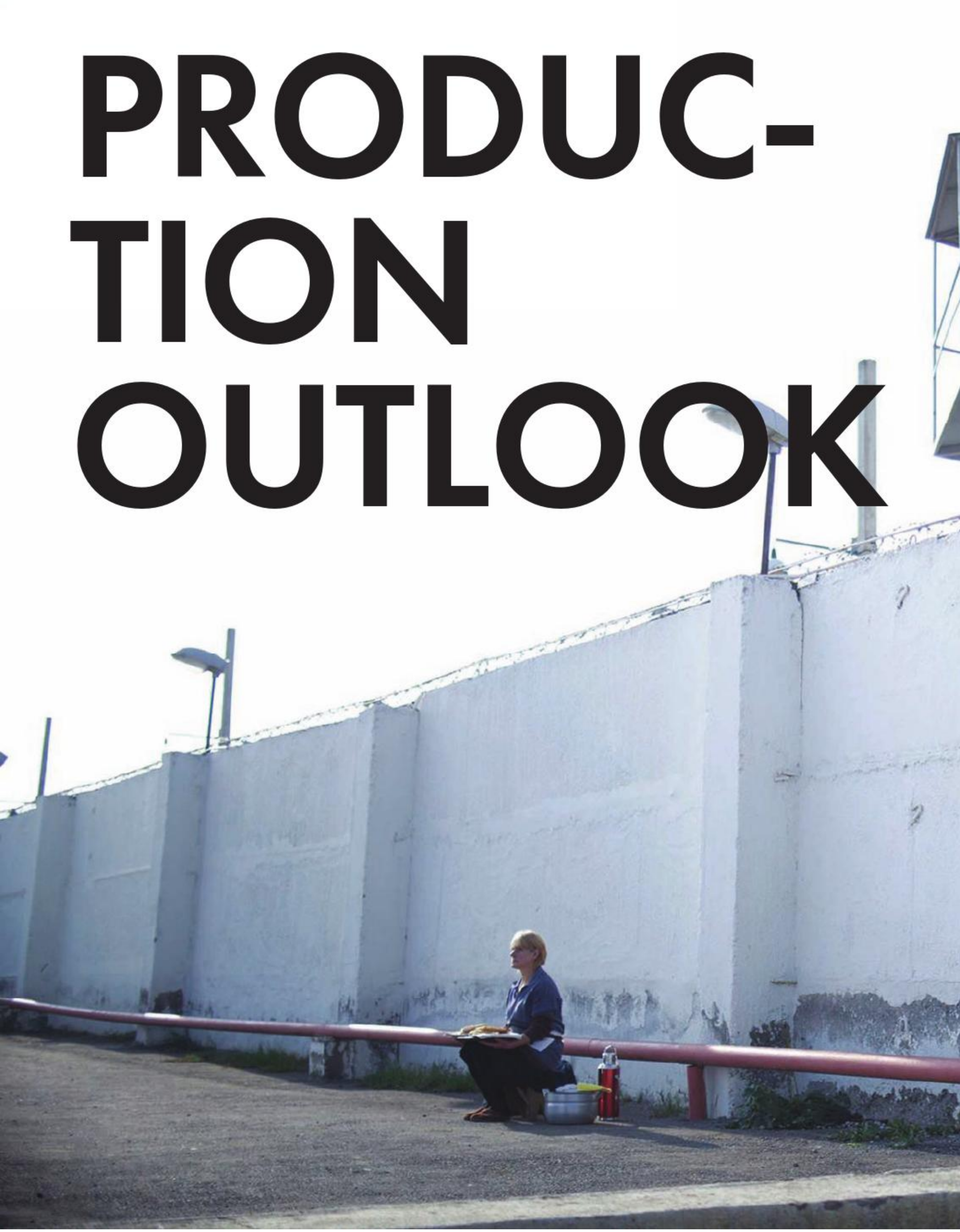

>> Magda Gogolashvili

Zaza Rusadze's first full-length feature "A Fold in My Blanket" tells the story of a town without a name, a town that has frozen, the tales that are not discussed and the people who have a lot to tell, but...

The story takes place at an uncertain time in an unknown Georgian town. The main character Dimitri (Tornike Bziava) arrives home after studying abroad. He spends his free time in the countryside. The first scene of the film shows him in a cave. He is in darkness and is searching for the light with his hands.

Gradually the audience gets to know his daily routine and the environment where he lives. From the very start, the viewer has many questions, and it seems the director purposefully refuses to answer them. The director seems to leave it entirely up to the viewer to make conclusions. So we are completely free to perceive the story in our own way.

Tornike Bziava, Tornike Gogrichiani, Zurab Kipshidze, Avtandil Makharadze... This is an incomplete list of the actors who tell the audience about the "folds in their blankets". At first sight, their environment is real, although the mixed narrative chain makes us feel that there are several parallel realities. Every object and phenomenon plays its role in the film. Together, they tell a story of the present which seems frozen between the past and the future. The country itself resembles the main character who is in a dark cave and searching for the light. Although the main characters live in a town with no name, the banners, stuffed animals and Russian names create an arbitrary world reminding us of the former Soviet Union. The characters in the film try to escape from this reality: each in their own way.

The folds in the blanket resemble mountains, which, for the main character, are a symbol of freedom and strong emotions, which he is lacking in the existing environment.

"A Fold in My Blanket" is a "new" reality created as a result of the destruction of the existing one. The director is frank in expressing his feelings for his native country, his fears for its future and the search for ways to improve it. However, at the same time, he avoids being subjective and allows the audience to perceive the film in their own way. The title itself is a kind of puzzle.

The subconscious, irrealistic, dreamworld often tells us about hidden emotions, pain and joy much better than the conscious inner world of a person. The folds in our blankets express our inner state, thoughts, fears and peacefulness. Watching the film, one can feel that everything we see on the screen is an expression of the director's thoughts, i.e. "the folds in his blanket" that disturb his conscious and subconscious. For this reason he shares his feelings and thoughts through the language of cinema.

"A Fold in My Blanket" has proved that contemporary Georgian directors are able to create films of thematic diversity, interesting both in their subject matter and their visual aesthetics.

I – R
P R

>> Neno Kavtaradze

In 2013, the pre-festival review of Berlinale, entitled "Seven Films You Must See at Berlinale!", included "In Bloom" by Nana Ekvtimishvili and Simon Gross. After a successful debut in Berlin, the film was awarded prizes in Hong Kong and Wiesbaden. The Fipress Jury "discovered the Georgian film In Bloom, which demonstrates the rebirth of Georgian cinema after a long crisis." Wiesbaden assessed the film as follows: "a debut drama relating the coming of age of young people, masterfully combining different subject lines, thus creating an impressive picture of Georgia 's recent history."

The story takes place in a suburb of Tbilisi in the 1990s. The main characters - Natia (Mariam Bokeria) and Eka (Lika Babluani) are 14. The country is in transition and nothing is stable, and Georgia is striving to protect its identity and independence. While the war rages in Abkhazia, the girls try to protect themselves and make the right decisions with regard to their future, peace, each other, relations with the opposite sex and improvements in their lives.

Buffer friendship and two girls against dysfunctional families, fear and uncertainty around: at school, at home, in the street, in the queue for bread.... People try to establish themselves through violence. They oppress the weak and then "celebrate their victory". Natia wishes her violent alcoholic father would die. Eka is in permanent conflict with her lonely and depressed mother and her elder sister. She suffers because her father is in prison and fills this emptiness by smelling his cigarettes.

Natia's admirer Lado gives her a gun. This odd and "unromantic" gesture is quite natural for the times. Natia gives the weapon to Eka, because she is often attacked by a young boy – Kopla. Eka refuses to take revenge and even helps the boy. She is against violence. Eventually she learns that her father is in prison because he murdered Kopla's father.

An endless chain of injustice and violence, parents' mistakes for which the children have to pay; a fatherless generation, the aggression of children, their protest against their parents, an indifferent and exhausted society, degraded disfunctional men, oppressed and scared women... All this is part of life in the 1990s and is reflected in the film by a number of naturally interlinked subject lines. The film is in no way a pseudo-romantic story of the war in Abkhazia, the electricity shortage and darkness. It is a real story with real characters. The director abstains from depicting the social and political realia, the war is evident only from some comments uttered in buses and from the TV screen.

The dramatic structure of the film is built in such a way that the story reaches its harrowing culmination as the viewers wait with bated breath to see what will happen when Natia's childhood suddenly ends. She is abducted from a bread queue and agrees to marry her abductor only because he has raped her. She is assured that with time she will fall in love with her husband (in contrast to this, there is a scene in the film in which the rebellious girls smoke cigarettes, drink coffee and discuss whether a girl has to stay a virgin until marriage). When Natia is abducted, Eka, angered and shocked, tries to awaken the indifferent people calmly observing the scene from the bread queue. She calls them cowards and even swears at them. One offended man slaps her. However, this man does not protest when some armed men brazenly jump the queue to buy bread. For Eka, Natia's wedding is false and unacceptable. She dances with a frozen expression on her face. Natia's father, who often beats his wife, drinks a toast to women at her wedding. Natia, shocked by Lado's murder, tries to take revenge and kill her husband with the weapon Lado gave her. Eventually, Eka and Natia throw the weapon into the water, thus putting an end to violence (in the same way as Levan Abashidze's character in Gio Mgeladze's film "No, Friend!"). The film ends with Eka at the entrance to the prison, awaiting a meeting with her father...

The audience is on its toes all through the film. The director of photography Oleg Mutu observes the main characters in his usual sensitive way (and the camera simply loves the girls). Besides the characters, the camera gives an impression of old Tbilisi streets, urban landscapes, bread queues, the depressed faces of Georgian people in the 90s... It is a world intuitively seen and observed. The camera is sensitive to the actors and also creates a visual reconstruction of the past.

"In Bloom" has proved once again that the main thing is not what you shoot but how you shoot it. Telling the private lives of two girls, the author reflects the entire epoch without showing war scenes (or any TV chronicles). War is "transferred" to everyday life and in doing this the film rehabilitates the physical reality.

O

>> Dinara Maghlakelidze

FP: Good evening, Giorgi. Thank you for finding the time for our conversation as I know you are very busy. The film you are currently shooting is called Corn Island. This project won the competition announced by GNFC in 2012 and then obtained financing from Eurimages. What were the challenges related to the financing of this film in Georgia and Europe?

The project won the GNFC competition for full-length features in 2012. We took part in the same competition in 2011 too, but for various reasons were unable to obtain financing. This time we were lucky, but despite winning, we didn't manage to obtain full financing of our budget. This created obstacles for our foreign partners, because they had planned their budget based on our contribution. As our share of the budget turned out to be less than was needed, we had to make strenuous efforts to retain the co-production and persuade our partners we would contribute our share of the budget later.

It is not easy to deal with large-scale European co-productions. Besides Georgia, the film is financed by Germany, France, Czech Republic, Swiss Foundation, Kazakhstan and Eurimages (European Film Support Foundation). We had to go through a long and complicated journey and wait for a long time until we had the complete budget.

FP: Do you mean bureaucratic obstacles too?

Not only them. It is not only about bureaucracy. The financing we obtained from GNFC eventually comprised about 20-22% of the budget. This meant we had to find the remaining 80% from other sources, which is very difficult indeed. When you have at least 50% of the budget, it is much easier to find the rest. We had to persuade our foreign partners that our contribution would include not only finances but also a quality product. Many filmmakers know this very well. You have to persuade foreign partners that you are a "good guy", but just being a good guy is not enough.

FP: You probably managed to convince your foreign partners because you are a director of a successful film. Your first full-length feature film - The Other Bank - has received awards at numerous festivals and was nominated for the prize of the European Film Academy...

Yes, my previous film convinced our European partners that they should cooperate. Another important factor in gaining their trust was the script of the current project. All these factors helped us to find co-financiers.

FP: This is your second film written in cooperation with Nugzar Shataidze. How did the idea arise?

We were still working on "The Other Bank" when we started thinking about our next project. Working with Nugzar was so comfortable for me that I was sure I would go on working with him. We talked a great deal about the theme of the next film. Then Nugzar told me a true story about Megrelian peasants who tried to become owners of little pieces of land created by the Enguri river in spring. The river carries down fertile soil from the Caucasus, which forms small islands near the river bank, enabling the peasants to plant corn on fertile soil. For these peasants corn is as important as bread, so the story was symbolic. In the rainy season the soil was washed away again by the river. It seemed nature or some divine power gifted the land to people and later took it back to gift it to others. These symbolic links between the land, the river and nature gave us the idea to make a feature film. I said to Nugzar: "The story is very interesting indeed. Let's turn it into a film". Nugzar said the story was good only for a documentary. However, eventually he agreed to make a feature film. Then we invented the characters: the old man, his granddaughter, etc. We thought it would be better if the old man lived near the border. The two hostile sides form a background which adds tension to the storyline. Gradually we invented episodes which eventually formed the entire story. Unfortunately,

Photo: Levan Shubashvili

Photo: Sandro Suladze

Nugzar passed away after we had written the first draft. Naturally, I was depressed. I realized I had no one to rely on and would be unable to continue working alone. I abandoned the script and started working on something else. However, as time passed, I realized I simply had to go on working on this script. I said to myself: "I have to make it. I have to first deal with this script and then I can move on to some other projects."

By the way, my French producer told me: "You'd better see to your other project which is nearly ready and easier to get financed. You shouldn't go back to that old story, starting everything again from scratch, looking for finance and wasting years." I told him I preferred to spend time doing this project because it was a stage I had to pass through. Indeed, it took three or four years to realize the project. But still I think I was right to choose this difficult path.

FP: I've read the script and like it a lot. To my mind, in this film the river and the island are personified, i.e. they are also characters in the film.

That was my aim. I wanted to have the river, the island and nature in general as the main characters of my film. I wanted to show the struggle of people against natural phenomena.

FP: Nature, the river, which gifts something to people and takes it back to gift it to others. The land which belongs to no-one. Does this symbolize Georgia's recent past?

I will abstain from making any comments in this regard. Certainly, the story itself brings numerous associations: the environment, the place, the characters and the opposition. Naturally, there will be diverse interpretations, and this is nice, because I always avoid making conclusions, whether with regard to conversations or relationships. I think cinema and art in general are more interesting when you avoid saying concrete things.

FP: From the script of your film one can easily guess the importance of image and visual narrative. How did you find the director of photography and how did you convince Elemer Ragalyi to work on this film?

I was taught that cinema is a visual narrative where the images accompany the story. The images have to arouse the viewer's emotions and express the thoughts of the director. I agree with this principle. In this film, the dialogues are minimal and the rare phrases are used to express the necessary information.

I attach great importance to visual narration. I prefer classical images that are not based on form but on real emotions. Some people are skeptical and think that the time has come to search for new forms in films. They think the more the

Photo: Levan Shubashvili

camera moves and shakes around, the deeper the philosophy of the film.

FP: I think the dogma 95 style is already a thing of the past.

I have never followed this style, although I like to watch good films made in this style. Personally for me, a film is something different. It took me a long time to find the director of photography. I invited several high level directors of photography to Georgia, such as Fred Kelemen, who had worked with Bela Tarr on The Turin Horse. For certain reasons, probably from my inner protest, we failed to cooperate. Then I had negotiations with the marvelous Iranian director of photography Tura Jaslan, and many others. I will not enumerate everyone now. Finally, I realized I was searching for something particular, and as soon as I understood the differences between my vision and the vision of the DoP, I refused to cooperate.

Anyway, I think I was right. Eventually I found Elemer Ragalyi who had worked on the latest film of Istvan Szabo. I was not familiar with him, I had simply seen Istvan Szabo's film. So I asked my producers to find his phone number. I called him and said: "Mr. Ragalyi, I am calling from Georgia and I would like to ask you to work on my film." I frequently do things like that. Later he remembered: "When you called me I was driving on holiday. I thought it was a Candid Camera joke!"

Working with Mr. Ragalyi was very pleasant and enjoyable. He is a high-class professional, not only because of his age and experience but also because he is a great thinker. The shooting process was very complicated and I don't know how we would have managed without Mr. Ragalyi.

FP: The shooting was done in several stages. Please tell us about the international crew.

It was international indeed and embraced representatives from 13 nations. I like it when a film is created by people of diverse mentalities, cultures and religions. This proves what a unique phenomenon film is. It links people who live in different realities and unites them under the language of cinema. I realize that despite formal differences people are the same everywhere. I had an international crew for my first film too. This time I enjoyed working with the multinational crew even more. I think I will continue to do this in the future. I usually invite totally unfamiliar people and make a choice based on what they have achieved in filmmaking. I may just call them and say: "Hello, I am a director from Georgia and I would like to invite you to work on my film..."

FP: I think one of the most important skills of a director is to be able to communicate with different people.

Interestingly enough, despite this simple and informal manner of offering work, I have never been refused. People know nothing about me, yet they agree to work with me.

The very fact that somebody calls and says: "I have seen your film and I'd like to work with you" has a magical influence on people. At least this is what has happened in my case.

FP: How did you find the actors? I remember you searched for the leading actress for a long time. How did you find the grandfather – Ilyas Salman?

There are only two main characters in the film and a third additional one. Other characters are episodic. I always attach great importance to casting, so it took me about two years to find the actors. I was often desperate, thinking I would never find the proper granddaughter and grandfather. Last year I was a member of the jury at the Asia-Pacific Film Festival in Australia. One Turkish film greatly impressed me and Ilyas Salman was in it. I was enchanted by his acting and invited him to take part in my film.

I found the girl by chance. My friend came across a photo on the Internet. He sent me the photo and asked me if I would be interested. I had already seen about 5000 girls without success. When I saw the photo, I knew the search was over. First we found the photographer, who said he had taken the photo three years before and did not remember who the girl was. He only remembered that the photo was taken at a religious festival in Vardzia. So we thought the girl must live in that region. We communicated with the Head of the Police Department in that region and sent him the photo. We uploaded the photo on Facebook and asked people whether they knew who the girl could be. Lots of people contacted us and shared their ideas of who she might be. Finally we were told that the girl lived in a monastery in Latali village. We talked to the villagers and were going to travel up there when it turned out that she was not the girl we were searching for. Meanwhile six days had passed. I told myself: "If I don't find the girl on the seventh day, I will give up". However, on the seventh day a young female photographer sent a photo saying this might be the girl, although she was very young on that photo. I compared the two photos and found some similarity. The woman didn't remember the girl's name, but she recalled that she had taken the photo in a village near Tskhinvali during the war in 2008. I called the village at night, woke everyone up, spoke to the headmaster of the village school and told him I was

Photo: Levan Shubashvili

Photo: Sandro Suladze

sending a photo for him to identify the girl. He didn't answer, as he was suspicious and didn't know why I needed the girl. Finally I went to the village, met the headmaster and the girl's parents, and they showed me the girl. She had grown up and was different from the girl on the photo. In any case, she was the one I had been searching for.

FP: The girl grows up in the film too.

She grew and changed in the shooting period, so the film really reflects her growth.

FP: Is the entire shooting process over now?

Almost over. There is only a minor episode of the prologue, without any actors. We plan to shoot it in the near future. We are already preparing for shooting this episode.

FP: What is the most enjoyable stage of film production for you: script development, searching for locations, shooting or editing? Some directors say shooting is the hardest while editing is the most pleasant stage...

For me shooting is the most interesting stage, although very hard indeed. You suffer a lot, but this suffering is pleasant. There is something masochistic about it.

FP: How about editing?

I work like this: I make a long director's version, I select the best episodes and put the story in order. Then I bring this version to the editor and tell him what direction I would like to go. He starts working, envisaging my comments regarding each episode. Then he shows me his version and we discuss it and make corrections, and so on and so forth. In this way my long version is abridged. We cut things in order to avoid boring the spectator and yet retain what is necessary.

FP: When will the film be finished?

In March, according to my plans. The editor will arrive in Tbilisi and we will work on it here. As for post-production, it will partly be carried out in Prague and partly in Leipzig.

FP: After this the film will probably have a festival life. When will it be screened in Georgia?

Probably at the end of September or beginning of October.

FP: Thank you for the interview. I wish you success with the film and look forward to its premiere.

Thank you. I wish you success too...

U "T "

>> Maia Levanidze

However terrible war is, it still reveals the magnificence of the human spirit in opposing such a strong enemy as death
Heinrich Heine

The complicated social and political processes, wars and the accompanying moral problems of the 1980s are widely discussed themes in contemporary Georgian culture. Georgian films abound in war themes and the post-war syndrome in the country. However, the events of the recent past have still to be discussed and evaluated. In the 1980s and 1990s these subjects were reported as facts, whereas beginning from the year 2000 Georgian films have chiefly focused on alienation in society, moral-ethical changes and their influence on the public and personal mentality.

The subject of Zaza Urushadze's film "Tangerines" is the war in Abkhazia. While analyzing a concrete problem, the director views war as destruction which affects social and personal lives as well as the human spirit. However, some people retain their humanity even in this terrible environment.

The director views the Abkhazian war as the destruction of the material welfare of concrete people and tangerines are a symbol of this welfare. Each side has its interests in the war. In this complicated multinational conflict there are only Georgians struggling to protect their land. The story develops on the border between war and arbitrary peace.

Two villagers and two opposing soldiers are united in one world. The story unfolds against the background of misty autumn, dark red hues, a foggy environment, the harsh sound of war and the expectation of the end. As the action takes place inside a house, the locked environment becomes narrower and the tension increases.

Although the film is a story of four people, most emphasis is placed on the Estonian Ivo and the Chechen fighter due to their complicated inner world and spiritual transformation.

The director is more interested in grasping the psychological features of mercenaries and their motivation for getting involved in the war rather than the cause and effect relations of the war itself. The simple and linear storyline enables the audience to answer the questions and form their attitude regarding the theme of the film.

We observe the metamorphosis of the Chechen soldier from aggression to generosity. In the process of dialogue with the Estonian host he starts to sympathize with the enemy, feels his own dignity and respect for traditions. In the initial episodes the wounded soldier instinctively carries out his duty and tries to take revenge for the death of his friend. In the following episodes his attitude changes to an ironic one. He menaces the enemy in a mechanical way. It is a kind of game where the opposition between the enemies is formal. Eventually the mood changes into self-irony and a dialogue is made possible. The Chechen mercenary is initially motivated by the material welfare of his family.
He does not realize his role and function in the conflict. He just follows events, perceiving the opposing side as his enemy. However, by the final scene his position is totally different. This metamorphosis takes him back to his motherland.

In the final scene we hear Georgian music from the car of the Chechen warrior. This means he has correctly evaluated

the actions of the Georgian soldier and is interested in understanding and perceiving the nature of his enemy.

Giorgi Nakashidze's acting is worth special mention: with simple strokes he shows the complex process of inner transformation of his character. Unlike him, Misha Meskhi's character is linear and bears all the features of a positive character. With him everything is clear and obvious. His motivation to protect his motherland immediately earns the sympathy of the audience. His character is that of a romantic person with high ideals and inner humanism. Despite being inexperienced in war, he is involved in the conflict against his will and manages to retain his humanity. He can sacrifice his life even for his enemy because they live under the same roof. The photo of the youngster kept by the old Lithuanian arouses nostalgic feelings in the Georgian soldier, who the war has made rude and tough. Thus, Misha Meskhi's character does not embrace a broad spectrum of features and we do not see his evolution in the film.

Ivo's sympathy for the Georgian soldier is based on his wish to protect him from aggression. The character of the Estonian host is outlined gradually. He and his friend Margus are neutral characters who could flee from the conflict, but their past keeps them in the village. Ivo cannot leave his hearth, his experience on this land and the grave of his son – a victim of the conflict. His historical motherland means nothing to him. War is unacceptable to Ivo: he does not understand why human lives are sacrificed with such heartlessness. "Tangerines" are not worth the life of a single soldier. However, his attempt to establish peace even in his own small environment is in vain.

The director tries to deal with the Russian and Abkhazian theme in a closed, arbitrary space. He offers two episodes: the raiding Abkhazians want to thank Ivo for saving the Chechen soldier. In this episode the director underlines the naïve attitude of the Abkhazians to the conflict. The Abkhazians think that they are the masters of the land, they fail to understand the attitude of the Russians, the seriousness of the conflict and its negative sides that are above all destructive to their own ethnic group. This episode also reflects the inner transformation of the Chechen warrior. He acts with dignity and tries to protect a helpless enemy according to the tradition of the Caucasian highlands. Some invisible threads unite people who find themselves in the same environment against their will. They begin to trust each other.

In the second episode there is a clash between the Chechen and the Russian military. The Russians treat their ally as if he were an enemy. The Russians offend and abuse the Chechen only because he is Caucasian. The Georgian starts to protect his former enemy, because now their position is the same on account of the time that they have spent under the same roof. At this moment they realize the value of human life, no matter whose it is.

Ivo buries the Georgian soldier beside his son. This is a sign of respect and sympathy. "If I had died, would you have buried me here too?" asks the Chechen soldier. "Yes, but maybe a little further away," Ivo replies with a smile. The unexpected mutual sympathy and trust arouses a feeling of self-criticism in the Chechen. Now he hates war and stops seeing it as just a source of income.

R D I O

>> Lela Ochiauri

Contemporary Georgia and its society, a portrait of people lost in time and space, dull reality and lost youngsters…

"Blind Dates" is in a way a continuation of Levan Koghuashvili's "Street Days". This time the portrait of society drawn by the director proves his original vision, themes and style, his attitude to reality and film, as well as his constant search for development and interpretation. This makes Levan Koghuashvili totally different from his characters, who are confused, passive and resigned to their fate.

Levan Koghuashvili does not focus on daily routine or current problems in society. He uses these themes as a background and highlights what is beyond the visible and tangible.

Sandro (Andro Sakvarelidze) - a young man (although already 40 years of age) - and his friend (Archil Kikodze) are neither gloomy nor tragic. Their life is completely lacking in adventure or action. They lead their lives in a dull, humdrum way, devoid of any sense, as if they are missing firm ground to stand on. Every day is empty and boring. Years pass in monotony, time flows slowly and seems to have stopped altogether (this mood is felt throughout the entire film).

Even when things start spiralling and the tension increases (the main character meets Manana, goes on blind dates, drives Manana's husband around, gets involved in forgery, revenge, fights, arrest, love triangles, conflicts, sheltering of a pregnant girl, etc.), Sandro leaves things as they are and keeps calm in every situation. Although these situations directly affect his life, he seems to be a silent observer. He speaks in rare utterances (just like the other characters in the film, whose dialogues are brief and almost meaningless) and does nothing to overcome the challenges in his life.

Sandro is in a vicious circle, from which he is passively and helplessly trying to escape. There is no emotion whatsoever on his face, his expression is frozen. He seems calm and observes the environment with mechanical actions. He carries out other people's wishes and other people's decisions without showing any protest. Due to the film's structure and marvelous direction, the audience feels his helplessness almost physically.

The feeling of loneliness, isolation and a drawn-out hiatus runs through the entire story. Wherever the action takes place – the streets of Tbilisi, the stadium, a shabby hotel room meant for brief rendezvous, apartments, stations or seaside cafes, the seashore or IDP shelters, the prison gates or dilapidated apartment blocks – the feeling of loneliness and helplessness is all pervasive.

Sandro's hidden sadness and alienation is expressed by the atmosphere, which is so well drawn by the director of photography Tato Kotetishvili and art director Kote Japaridze.

The story is as dramatic and emotional as rain or a pale cloudy day. The weather is permanently sad (compare Eistenstein's "non-indifferent nature"), with wind and rain taking turns. The frames are stretched in time, and a slow camera frequently fixes its lens on something secondary and unimportant. This tempo and rhythm expresses the inner development of emotions and sensations as well as the dull flow of life.

There is complete silence all around. Nature seems frozen. There are the random sounds of everyday life and a single musical "parenthesis" (Jakob Bobokhidze's song based on Galaktion Tabidze's verse). Sandro hears this melody while talking on the phone. It sounds like a remote voice lost in the rustling of wind. Later, fragments of the melody are repeated as an echo of the inner mood, which is again followed by complete silence.

Levan Koghuashvili's new film is a fable about contemporary society, which is either unwilling or incapable of progress (thus different from the films of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s). Life seems like a brief blind rendezvous based on a chain of arbitrary events, following the wishes and orders of others, peaceful, calm and obedient.

At the same time, the film is full of warmth and affection, sympathy and hope, light humour (not irony), almost intangible subtexts like a dim light that shines even in the most gloomy situations like a light breeze.

Scriptwriters: Levan Koghuashvili and Boris Frumin. Starring – Andro Sakvarelidze. Director – Levan Koghuashvili. Director of Photography – Tato Kotetishvili. Art Director – Kote Japaridze. Costumes – Tinatin Kvinikadze. Producers – Levan Koghuashvili, Suliko Tsulukidze and Olena Yershova. Executive producer – Keti Machavariani., Actors: Andro Sakvarelidze, Archil Kikodze, Ia Sukhitashvili, Kakhi Kavsadze, Marine Kartsivadze, Marlen Egutia, Levan Ghlonti, Vakho Chachanidze, Sopo Gvritishvili, Jano Izoria and others.

Produced by Kino Iberika and Milimeter Film, with the support of the Georgian National Film Center, with the participation of Tato Films, Nemo Films and the Barandov Studio.

P CI L
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N N O

The Georgian National Film Center has been in existence for 12 years. There have been mistakes as well as achievements on the path to the formation, management and financing of the Georgian film industry. During the period of its existence, the country's chief film agency has had five directors, each contributing to the development of the organizational structure, introduction of new forms and methods of film production, establishing links with European film agencies and promotion of Georgian films worldwide. At the end of last year there were a lot of arguments and discussions regarding the Film Center. Finally a competition for the position of director was announced, and on March 25th, 2013, based on the recommendations of the Council of Advisors, the Georgian Minister of Culture and Protection of Monuments appointed Nana Janelidze as Director of the Georgian National Film Center.

In an interview with Nana Janelidze we discussed the current objectives of the Georgian National Film Center.

F.P. How do you evaluate the past activities of GNFC? What was the situation when you arrived as Director?

Above all, I should mention the significant achievements of the Georgian National Film Center in the past three years, especially with regard to the integration of Georgian cinema into the European film industry. This can be seen by the list of contemporary Georgian films receiving awards at international festivals. Georgia became a member of organizations such as Eurimage, Film New Europe and European Film Promotion. There have also been many achievements in the field of professional development. Georgian filmmakers have participated in training programs organized by MAIA Workshop, EAVE and the Robert Bosch Foundation. I came to find a well-organized structure and a team of professionals who are doing their best to achieve success.

F.P. What is the most pressing task for the coming three years?

I will abstain from making promises. We are willing to do a lot of things, but we need resources. We should identify problems and find partners who will help us solve these problems. The first thing I did was to make the Experts Committee more diverse, with involvement of representatives from all generations. We already have winners in 5 competitions and 16 projects have been financed. We should work in a variety of different directions and do our best to overcome problems. We have already met representatives of different sectors and heard about their needs.

F.P. What problems have been outlined and what are the concrete steps to overcome them?

There are many problems with regard to animation. At the meeting with animation filmmakers we agreed to announce competitions for script development. In animation it is very important to define the age of the target audience. We will issue development grants for 10 projects, so that they are ready for production next year. Several foreign companies have promised to assist us. We viewed a number of recent animated films and it turned out that the directors had not seen each other's films. Animations are not screened either in cinemas or on TV. A product is created and remains unknown to the public.

F.P. There are similar problems with regard to documentaries. TV channels

Photo: Khatuna Khutsishvili

screen their own products and call them films.

We have lost the culture of creative documentaries. The past decades have left ample material for documentary films. An interesting platform has been offered by the Noosfera Foundation. One of its founders is the Georgian documentary filmmaker Archil Khetaguri. We have commissioned them to implement a project called DocStories Georgia embracing 10 documentary films under the title "Farewell, Soviet Georgia!". The project focuses on the hard period of our recent past. I think directors of our generation should take part in this project, as filmmakers aged 22 hardly remember and realise the hardships we suffered. In any case, the competition is open for everyone. The participants will attend a 6-day workshop in Achara with a 24-hour working regime. International documentary experts will offer training and online consultations covering issues such as narrative structure, dramaturgical development, selection of the main character and the visual image, project packaging according to international standards, audiovisual market, documentary festival strategy, etc. The second session is planned for October, as part of the CineDoc-Tbilisi International Documentary Film Festival in Tbilisi. The consultants will help projects to meet international standards. The participants will present already developed projects to representatives of Georgian and foreign TV channels, producers, distributors and sales agents. We are willing to send these projects to the International Festival of Documentary Films in Amsterdam (IDFA). The project also involves lectures for the representatives of Georgian TV channels. Even if television makes a minor investment, projects will have an opportunity to obtain European financing. Television companies should understand that they have to establish close links with the film industry.

F.P. So far we have no producers with creative vision and the necessary skills to negotiate and obtain financing.

We are still unaware of many things and move forward by inertia. In the past, the state acted as our producer. Therefore, our training also includes the development of producers' skills. For instance, the British Council has announced a competition for participation in the training of London Microwave's Microschool program Microschool International held in September along with the Batumi International Film Festival. The partners of the program are GNFC and the Batumi Film Festival, and the coordinators Tamar Tatishvili and Irma Janjghava. 5-6 teams of producer and director will be selected as a result of the competition. They have to submit the first draft of a feature film script. The training involves all the stages a film undergoes from the original concept to release. The training will teach the participants how to make films on a low budget. At the end of the program participants will have a well-developed feature film project.

F.P. Our tax system is unfavourable for private investors, and therefore there is practically no alternative financing. What are the plans of GNFC in this regard?

There are tax initiatives, which will need joint efforts to be approved. It is my great wish to achieve amendments to the tax system and make Georgia attractive to foreign productions. In this way we will have a significant inflow of finances into the country, and our professionals will have an opportunity to share the experience of foreign professionals. This also includes practice in foreign languages. This will also involve the development of infrastructure such as roads, hotels, etc. The idea of returning 20% to a foreign production is very attractive to foreign filmmakers. There are similar schemes in Bulgaria, Romania, Malta, and New Zealand, where 40% is returned. This incentive has led to great advances in the film industry of these countries.

Besides GNFC, other government agencies should also become interested in strengthening the film sector. In many countries, regional funds are an alternative source of financing and we also want to introduce this practice. This year the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Achara is implementing a film support program, offering Georgian and foreign filmmakers finance for full-length and short features, documentary and animation films. Special benefits will be given to projects that support the use of local human and infrastructural resources. This will create employment opportunities for film professionals, students and representatives of other professions. The Commission will allocate a grant to the amount of 100,000 GEL. The region's objective is to attract crews and finances, which will be a source of revenue for the region.

F.P. We hear a lot about the success of Georgian films abroad. However, the Georgian audience knows little about these films, especially in the regions.

Certainly it is necessary to promote these films inside the country. Screenings should be organized in every possible space _ high schools and secondary schools, towns and villages. We could use a popular European program - "Bring Your Own Chair".

F.P. Should the films financed by GNFC be shown to film critics prior to release?

A film belongs to its producer. We could include it in the contract that a producer should screen the film first to the Experts Committee and to film critics. We also want to preserve these films in the archive of audio-visual documents. In agreement with the producers, copies should be created and made available for scholars.

F.P. What is the contribution of the Film Center in the field of education?

High and professional schools have their own financing. We assist the Amirani Student Film Festival. Our priority is to include cinema in the school curriculum. We have certain ideas and are acquainting ourselves with the experience of other countries in this area. It is a large-scale project and we can handle it only in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

F.P. What resources do you have? You need high-quality digital copies of Georgian films, rights for screening the films, etc...

We will start with the resources we have, for example the films made in the recent period. Before other producers allow us to screen their films, I start with my own film. Together with Kakhi Kavsadze I visited a German school and showed the film Will There Be a Theater Up There?! to pupils in the 10th-12th grades, and this was followed by a very interesting discussion. We also want to establish friendly relationships with the First Classical School.

Schools may offer clubs where children can make simple films. Film critic Tea Gabidzashvili implemented an interesting project in Kutaisi: first she showed films to the pupils of the children's home, then she gave them the chance to make films. Scriptwriter Beso Odisharia helped children write scripts, an actor of Kutaisi Theater gave them acting lessons. Then I arrived and helped them write a shooting script. We shot it the following day. It is not difficult to do things like this. Municipalities have enough resources to provide cameras for schools.

We have another interesting project: a festival of children's films is held in Giffoni – a small town in Italy. 70,000 children arrive there from all Europe and the event is a real celebration. We want to get involved in the event and bring Giffoni to Tbilisi. This needs significant financing, but I am confident the business sector and the state will assist us in this. According to the festival regulations, first our children have to act as jury members in Giffoni. We have already selected three children who will travel to Giffoni this year.

We all used to go to music schools. And although we did not become pianists, we understand music. The taste of the film audience should be developed in a similar way.

F.P. This means investing in the future audience, but they will want to go to cinemas. However, there are only four cinemass functioning in Georgia nowadays...

Only 27 cinemas have remained out of 100. Out of these, 19 are privately-owned. Both Amirani and Rustaveli function well. They have their interests, although they always screen Georgian films, both commercial productions and films financed by GNFC. What films the audience actually want to see is another issue. We need municipal cinemas. GNFC can support this, but the issue should be handled by the municipalities. Even if a single municipal cinema were to be opened, it would be a step forward. A municipal cinema with a good program would function well. Besides, the tickets would be much cheaper. For instance, the Apollo cinema could fulfill this function.

F.P. In Europe and the USA there are cinemateques or film museums in such historical buildings.

Apollo is private. If I am not mistaken, it had to retain its profile for ten years after the takeover. We may lose it, so we should do our best to save this ancient cinema of the European network.

F.P. in Europe, for example in France, one of the priorities of the national film center is the preservation of the film heritage. What are the plans of GNFC in this area?

We want to raise the issue of the cinematheque. We are planning a meeting with Costa Gavras, the President of the French Cinematheque. Eldar Shengelaya talked with him about this two years ago. We want to introduce their model, so we should analyze all aspects and start doing this step by step.

F.P. This year you went to Cannes as the Director of GNFC. What were your impressions and experience?

I met representatives of partner organizations, above all, the Director of the French Film Center Eric Garandeau. He asked me about the priorities and directions of GNFC as well as our attitude to co-production. In July he will arrive in Tbilisi and present the French model of state support. A visit of Eurimages President Jobst Plogg is planned for autumn. GNFC is continueing and even increasing its cooperation with international film markets and co-production platforms, the Sarajevo Film Festival program Cinelink, and others.

Within the Sarajevo Festival Film Market, the Producers Network program hosted Georgian producers Vova Kacharava and Noshre Chkhaidze. They were specially invited by the European producers network EAVE, together with several European producers. Director and producer Zaza Rusadze took part in European Film Promotion's program PRODUCERS ON THE MOVE. This program helps European producers to find partners for their projects, offers platforms and improves the opportunity of establishing industry contacts.

Once again I realized the importance of our youngsters participating in international training programs. Therefore, the priorities of GNFC are the support of international cooperation, establishing contacts between Georgian and foreign film professionals and creating favourable conditions for the promotion of Georgian films.

>> Marina Kereselidze

O I

Why Chantrapas?

Chantrapas is an old word meaning honest people who will never get rich or become high-ranking officials, businessmen or merchants. Such people have become scarce in modern Georgia. People have become over-serious and the easy-going chantrapas have almost disappeared. That is why I decided to make a film about naive, kind-hearted and stubborn chantrapas.

F.P. When you start shooting a film, do you know exactly what you are going to shoot?

Shooting is a difficult and complicated process. There are certain restrictions, so you cannot use all your imagination. You have to outline and visualize a film in advance. Art directors Nugzar Tarielashvili and Nana Iosseliani draw an entire film for me. We hand out a photocopy of these drawings to the entire crew, so that everyone knows precisely what and where we are going to shoot. My colleagues – be it Giorgi or Eldar Shelgelaya, Merab Kokochashvili or Levan Koghuashvili – must work like this too. However, sometimes a totally new idea occurs in the shooting process and you may deviate from the initial path.

It is dangerous to change the path in the shooting process. I try to avoid changing things in the strict conditions of capitalism. Filmmaking is connected with so many problems: there are a lot of people in the crew, a lot of money is spent, the schedule is strict – so the pressures of production press on your throat and stop you from starting a different song.

F.P. Your films are comprehensible without words. Do you think words matter a lot in films?

I really think words don't matter, but nobody believes me. There was an interesting experiment: in my youth I made a film called April. In this film there is a scene of husband and wife arguing using non-existent words. Later in Samegrelo I made the film Pastoral. Half of the dialogue was in the Megrelian language, and therefore incomprehensible for the majority of the Georgian audience. Then I went to Africa and made a film in the dialect of this Diola tribe. I showed this film to the residents of an African village, and I was upset to find they did not understand a word. In general, cinema was initially silent, and its devices were mime and action. Misha Kobakhidze continued this tradition in his short films.

F.P. So you think sound in films is a step backwards?

I think so. When sound was invented films turned into chatterboxes. You can close your eyes and still understand everything - there is no point in watching the screen. But if a film is in a foreign language you will understand nothing. Subtitles simply hamper understanding and affect the content. That's the problem.

F.P. What about theater?

Why do we Georgians appreciate Ivane Machabeli's translation of Shakespeare? At the theater, mise en scène and live

Photo: Gaël Sicot

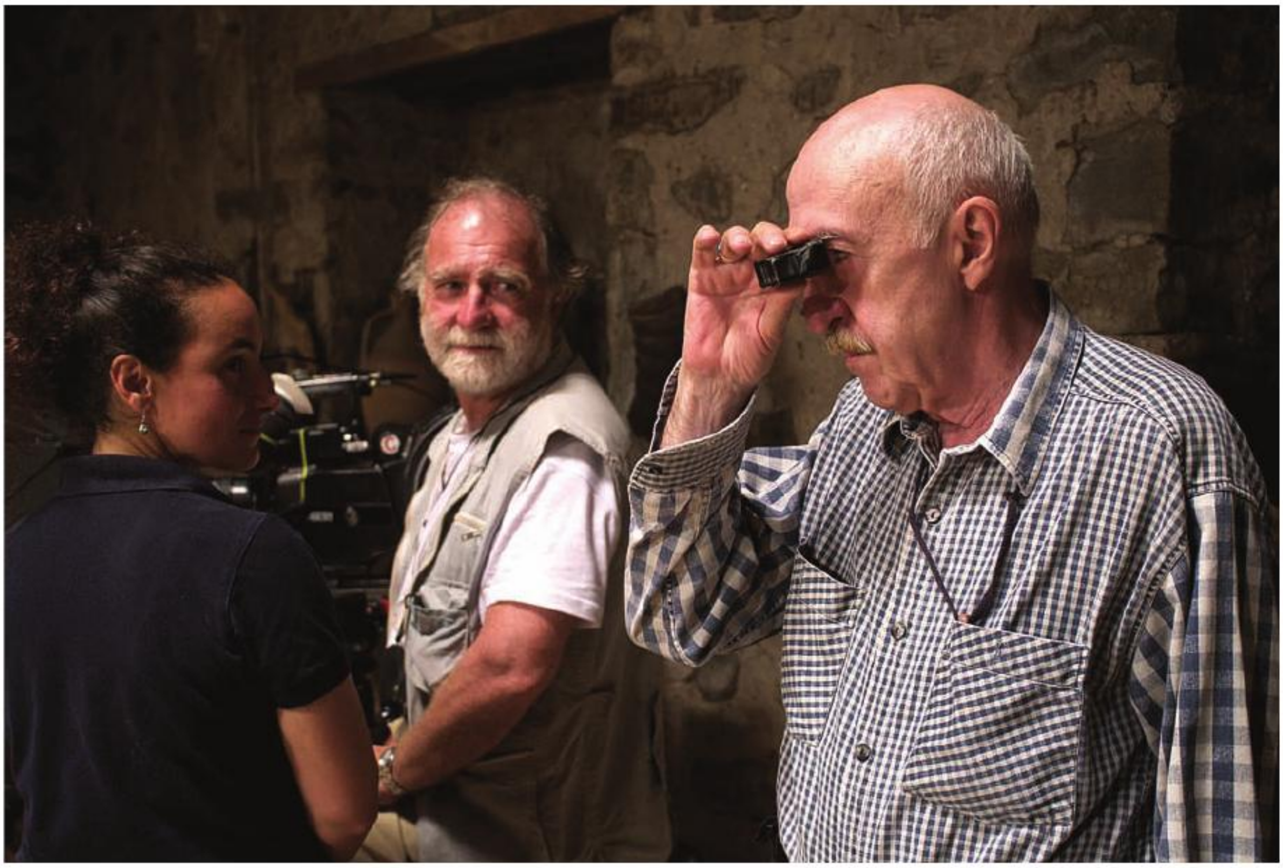

Photo: Gaël Sicot

action are very important. Yet the most important thing is the word. If you don't hear the texts written by Moliere, Shakespeare or Hamsun, if you don't understand that Hamlet says "To be or not to be – that is the question..." the play is a failure. Robert Sturua delighted British audience with his mise en scène in "Richard III". But the fact is that the British audience knows the text of this play by heart in any case.

F.P. Have you ever thought of staging a play?

No. This is not my profession. I know what I know and that's it.

F.P. Is there anything you have not yet learnt with regard to your profession?

At least within the boundaries I have set for myself, there are no secrets. I am often delighted by the masterpieces of other directors, and I know what I am capable of. Everyone has his nest, his thoughts and skills. Who can reach the depths of Satyajit Ray, Fellini, Ingmar Bergman or Orson Welles? Some of my colleagues simply imitate these directors, and this is a disgrace.

F.P. Has poetry disappeared from films?

I haven't thought about it. As the saying goes, in poetry "long is said briefly...". For me, poetry has no explanation, it has a mystery and covert content, the same as beauty. It just exists and that's all...

F.P. How did directors like Tarkovsky and Parajanov manage to make masterpieces in the epoch of totalitarianism and why can't contemporary directors make masterpieces?

If there is an obstacle, you can find great pleasure in overcoming it. But the absence of obstacles is like hitting a piece of cotton with a hammer...

F.P. There have been no such obstacles in Europe, but they used to make masterpieces there....

Films were invented in France. Great thinkers started making films because they realized cinema was a flexible device to express an opinion and share it with others. Probably they thought cinema was the best way to introduce the public

Photo: Niko Tarielashvili

to the works of Rabelais, Montaigne, and Voltaire. The great French directors were Rene Clair, Abel Gance, Marsel Carne, Jacques Tati, Jacques Rivette, Godard, Eric Rohmer. Jean Vigo made a great film "Atalanta". This spirit spread all round the world. In Italy there appeared the great school of neorealism. De Sica made "Miracle in Milan". Russia had Boris Barnet, Germany had Fritz Lang, America had John Ford, and we had Nikoloz Shengelaya. Then it all stopped and stagnated. There was no ideological censorship in France, but society was sick with ignorance. Ignorance of the audience is much worse and more severe than censorship. Anyway, we should be proud of the level our predecessors reached in such a short period. Then... Then Hollywood attacked us with a regiment of tanks and pressed everything to the ground. Why did Orson Welles escape from Hollywood? Why did John Ford stop? Even Chaplin fled from America to Europe. Unfortunately, he didn't create anything important here. So, as usual, the crowd was the winner.

F.P. Your initial profession was mathematics. Does this still influence you?

I think it is better to avoid the profession of a mathematician or scientist in general. I will try to explain why. It is hard to imagine that the masterpieces of Bach, Da Vinci, Dante and Stravinsky are not based on strict mathematical calculations. The ancient Egyptians, Greeks and later Newton have left tools for human thinking - geometry, algebra and differentials. It's impossible to become a good musician without everyday practice. It's the same with mathematics. So I no longer belong to this profession. But when I build the structure of my film, I often involuntarily use the methods that have stuck in my mind as a result of mathematical thinking and calculations.

As for science: people are inherently curious. When this feature becomes boundless, we start taking complacence in knowledge, thought and erudition. Thus a man becomes part of a snobbish cast of scientists and looks down on ordinary people.

The covert symbol of oil in ancient oriental texts is a genie in a bottle. Someone curious and foolish opens the bottle and lets the genie out. The genie grants three wishes and disappears with loud laughter

to commit something awful. Should we be glad or sorry that the supply of oil is decreasing? Meanwhile, we drive cars, fly planes and breathe polluted air... At the same time we ask: how was the universe created, what was there prior to that, what is endless or permanent... Who can answer these questions? No one.

There are permanent tectonic movements in the earth, continents collide, hot magma boils in the depths and bursts out from the craters of volcanos There are magnetic or thermonuclear hurricanes on the sun... Scientists try to grasp the mysteries of the universe, sometimes they fail but they go on thinking. Nothing can stop thought...

They have been using gunpowder for fireworks in China since ancient times. In 14th century Europe, the English inventor Roger Bacon used this powder for guns. It was followed by cannons, machine-guns, bombs... Nothing could stop the scientists: they invented annihilating weapons and secret devices of evil.

Fighting wars in ancient times and in the Middle Ages meant the use of spears and swords. This was connected with courage and military skills.

The logic and essence of war has not changed: when an invading army enters a country, there is a lot of violence, looting and destruction. This happened to the Incas, the Aztecs, Troy, Rome, Athens, Alexandria, Constantinople and Georgia. Nowadays a warrior is a computer programmer sitting safely in a bunker, pressing a button and sending a missile to a distant place to annihilate a peaceful population. Let's remember Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

Our generation has witnessed the greatest discoveries of the 20th century. But the work of scientists aimed at the welfare of humankind often leads to catastrophes. Scientists should not be blamed: they are attracted by their tasks the same way that a bee is attracted by a flower. Scientists have no time to think about who will use their discoveries and for what purpose.

Take for instance Andrey Sakharov – the famous scientist and dissident struggling against the Soviet system. At first he presented this system with a hydrogen bomb, thus prolonging its life for another twenty years. Later Sakha-

Photo: Niko Tarielashvili

rov regretted his discovery, but nothing could be changed. Interestingly enough, this happened ten or eleven years after the tragedy in Hiroshima. Khrushchev wrote: "Sakharov begged me not to test this bomb. I said: "As head of state I am obliged to test your invention. If you hadn't discovered this awful thing, you would be living happily now."

What we call progress (electrical engines and internal combustion engines, locomotives, automobiles, airplanes) started at the end of the 19th century, although the basis for all this was formed back in the age of Da Vinci. This is the nature of humankind: we won't stop until we blow this miserable planet up. Then probably another planet will appear from the remnants of the earth, and so on and so forth.

F.P. So you think the benefit that progress has brought to humankind is losing its meaning?

Many things can be considered progress. It has always been like that: every new generation makes natural use of what was novelty for their preceding generation. They don't remember what was there before they were born. So they don't make a distinction between what man has gained and what he has lost. Dante, Rustaveli and Pushkin wrote masterpieces using quill and ink. What progress has the pen brought? Handwriting deteriorated and people invented typewriters.

Passionate physicists - Bell and Marconi – invented the radio and telephone. The self-taught hard-working American Thomas Edison invented things we used every day : the electric light bulb, the telegraph, the gramophone and kinescope (the ancestor of the cinematograph and television). The results are that we constantly talk on the phone: we have ceased writing letters. Only at Christmas do we send cards to our friends and family. Tired after the day's work we lie on the sofa to watch TV and take the cynical chattering to be blessing and inspiration!

There has been no progress in art whatsoever: the Indian Vedas, Gilgamesh, Homer, Sophocles, Goethe, Tolstoy, Hugo, Baratashvili or Galaktion Tabidze. This is real literature and nothing has changed in it! I will say nothing about the devices of painting: the temptation of progress has not touched them at all.

F.P. But cinema is a result of progress…

Cinema was created for purely commercial purposes. So nowadays it is what it was intended to be.

F.P. Has it returned to its initial form?

We cannot avoid this. Cinema is a commercial innovation. However, there are some filmmakers whose films are called "auteur films", whether it is Dovzhenki, Norstein's "Hedgehog in the Mist", Giorgi Shengelaya's "The Trip of a Young Composer" or "Pirosmani", Eldar Shengelaya's "Blue Mountains" or Merab Kokochashvili's "Great Green Valley". I think it is a mockery to call such films "auteur films". Without an author, there is no film. A film without an author is a production of a factory i.e. all products are exactly the same.

Jacques Daguerre invented photography, the Lumiere brothers invented a camera, projector and perforated tape. Twenty years later other engineers invented sound cinema. This was the end of an era. Then they invented color images, Dolby-stereo sound. Some months ago cinemas started showing attractions with three-dimensional fictitious reality. Maybe soon they will add smells, and later it may even become tangible... Contemporary cinema has almost lost the language of moving images and has turned into a barbaric entertainment show – and this is what the audience has grown to like. What can we offer those who need spiritual food? Not much. In the near future no commercial company will invest in auteur films.

F.P. However, Chaplin managed to make "auteur films" profitable as well..

In the age of silent films brilliant comic actors– Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd and Max Linder failed to achieve commercial success. However, Chaplin did quite well in this regard. As an entrepreneur he didn't have faith in his talent and taste. That's why he asked people from the street to watch his films and attentively observed their reactions. If they didn't laugh, he searched for the mistakes he had made in that section. Frequently he changed the scene ten or fifteen times until he was sure people would burst with laughter. This method brought success and profit. And one more thing: this hard-working and, what's more important, wealthy comedian managed to perform the role of a homeless beggar. From the commercial viewpoint, this main character was quite profitable in the social situation at that time. His marvelous works still bring pleasure to our mind and eyes.

Photo: Gaël Sicot

Photo: Gaël Sicot

He was talented in everything, that's why he managed to combine creation with commercial success.

I have always loathed this money-oriented army of villains sticking to this "progressive monster" like leeches. Fortunately, real works of art still have their grateful and understanding audience. True, such cinema is endangered, but it is still alive in the treasury of mankind, the same as Dante's poetry, read by thousands of readers over the centuries. Of course, these readers differ greatly from those who read detective stories in the metro trains.

FP. The truly valuable is never affected by time....

We have to believe this. However, there are frequent cases where low quality and vulgar phenomena also remain unaffected by time.

FP. What would you say to a person who intends to visit Georgia and knows nothing about the country?

If I mentioned Rustaveli, Vazha-Pshavela, Davit Kldiashvili and Galaktion Tabidze, they wouldn't know what I was talking about. Therefore, I would say: you are going to a country which is the cradle of wine. For any European, wine is a concept analogous to culture.

You are probably often asked whether you identify yourself with the cinema of a particular country, whether it is France or Georgia. In general, are there any national peculiarities in the cinema?

We remember very well where we come from. A Georgian may spend all his life in various countries, but he will never turn into a Frenchman, a Russian, or a Dutchman.

I am trying to avoid being categorical. Simply while talking to you I began to think this way. In a different conversation after a certain period I may say different things.

A phenomenon which is so scarce worldwide and so peculiar to Georgia is polyphony. This means that each of us has a thread of thought in the common multicolored carpet. That's why a highlander Vazha-Pshavela directly and even harshly told the aristocrat-poet Akaki Tsereteli "There is nothing bad about hearing the roaring of a mountain bull..."

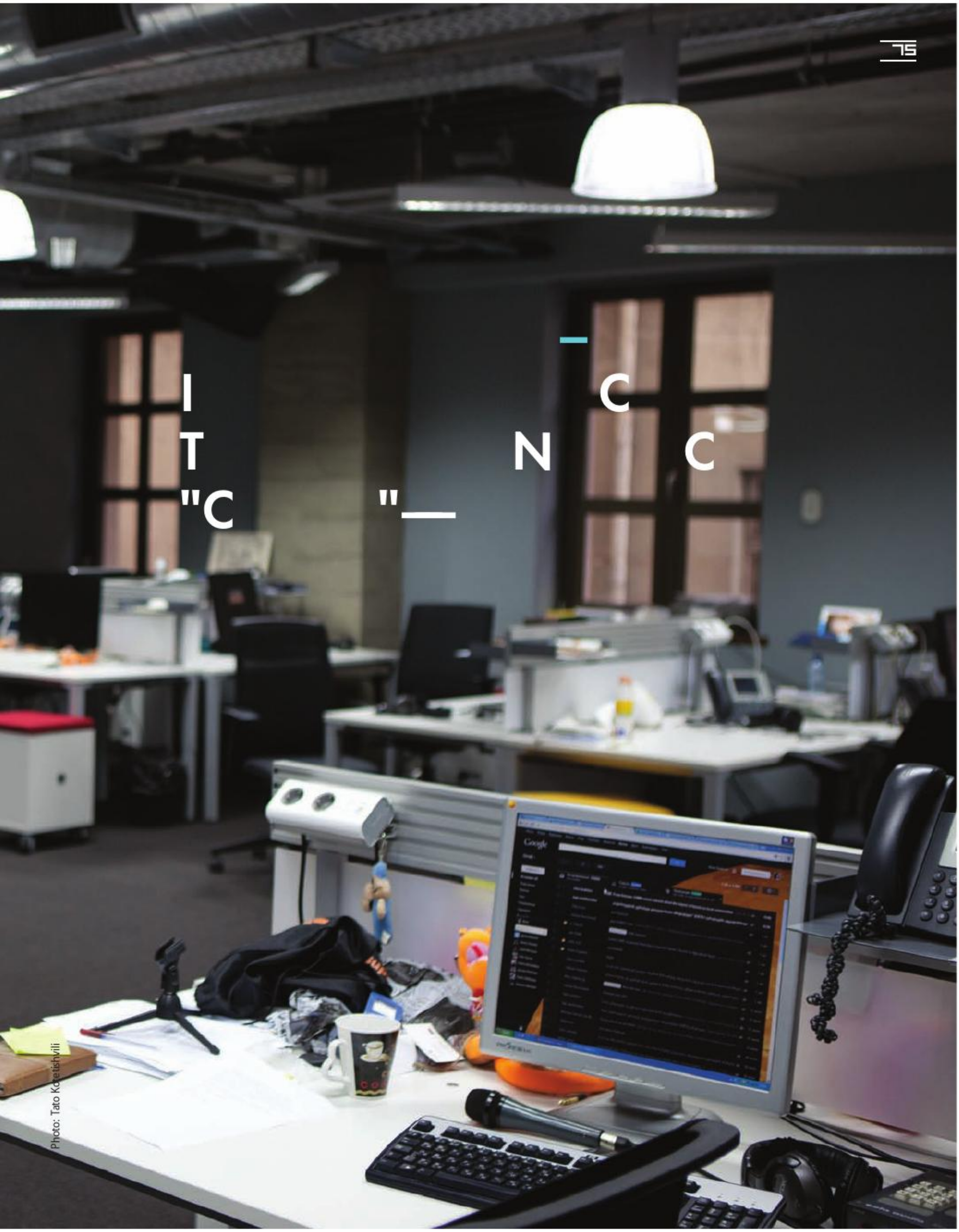

Photo: Tato Kotetishvili

"At a certain age you realize how limited you are in time and space and understand that life may not be long enough to see all the films you would like to…" In the section "My Cinema" we interviewed Gogi Gvakharia, focusing on cinema in general and not separate films. Our first question was whether a film critic should have "his cinema". He answered: "No, a film critic should like different films... If he has "his own cinema" it is time to start directing films. I am sure he will make a good film, because he already knows what kind of cinema he loves."

F.P.: Yet, there are some stereotypes about your priorities in cinema. For instance, I have heard from young directors: "Gvakharia won't like my film. He only likes Visconti…"

This isn't the case. I remember that I found delight with each period we studied in art history: first I thought the Middle Ages were the best, then I thought it was antique art, then Baroque. This is in the nature of man, and the same is true for cinema. Visconti is very close to me as a thinker, but I don't consider him the summit of cinematography. Of course, he is a great thinker, artist, philosopher and aesthetician. In his time Visconti was like a king in Italy, and anyone who didn't get into his circle, simply got angry. If he turned an actor down, they would become his life-long enemy. People don't always love kings, although they dream of being close to them.

F.P.: Probably people subconsciously identify your position in Georgian film criticism with the position of Visconti in cinema. We know for sure that you don't watch contemporary Georgian films. Students and young directors try in vain to attract your attention. Where do you usually watch the latest films, only at festivals?

Chiefly at festivals. Frankly speaking, I don't have any rules in this regard. I may attend premieres or pre-screenings. In general, I think a film critic should try to avoid premieres, especially if he is invited on purpose. I remember how Temur Babluani showed me his film "The Sun of the Sleepless" with no sound. I remember how we sat in a small cold room in the film studio. There was no electricity, no gas, nothing. Temur himself "voiced" the characters of his film … it was more interesting than watching the film later. I understood then how talented he was...

This year I saw two Georgian films at Berlinale: Zaza Rusadze's "The Fold in My Blanket" and Nana Ekvtimishvili's "In Bloom". Zaza's film is very interesting from the aesthetic point of view. But I simply don't like this kind of cinema. I don't like half-truth. I like Aesop's language and the genre of fable, but it seems that the author is not bold enough and disguises what he wants to say by excessive formalistic search, but I may be mistaken. "In Bloom" reminds me of Aki Kaurismaki, who I like a lot. It is also reminiscent of German in the 1970s, even early Fassbinder... But in a contemporary Georgian context I see the film as an escape from reality. This kind of aesthetics and arbitrariness in Georgian films is incomprehensible to me. Dramatically speaking, the film seemed devoid of music. However, I didn't write a review of the film. I think when you review a film you should have seen it at least twice. Nana Ekvtimishvili's film is a rare exception in contemporary Georgian cinema which you enjoy watching and never want to finish. Our directors hardly ever think of the enjoyment of the audience. After this film, you leave the cinema haunted with its images. The work of the director of photography is worth special mention, as well as the natural acting of the main characters. In general, it is very important how the director explains their tasks to the actors. Poor acting in contemporary Georgian cinema is not only the problem of non-professional actors.

F.P.: Let's discuss other problems…

I'll be categorical and say that many things in Georgian cinema should not be called "cinema" at all. In contemporary architecture there is a lot of imitation

A film critic is not a teacher! In the Soviet epoch we were obliged to attend screenings at the film studio. It was an honest attitude to our job

of antiquity. The same can be said with regard to cinema. There are many imitation pseudo-films. Some episodes or frames may be interesting, but that's all. Sometimes we watch advertisements and think the film is good, but eventually it fails to meet our expectations. People often get angry when I say this. From the very first moment you can tell whether or not you are watching a real film. I have enough experience in this. In Georgia the very concept of cinema is simplified. Besides, we are over-ambitious. You might be able to create a masterpiece with an iPhone, but you can't force the audience to accept it as real cinema. It is not a matter of the channel, it's a question of the quality and respect for the audience. There was a time when the Cannes festival was against digital analogues. Now it has to accept this format, as some directors make films available only in this format. The BIAFF organizers were offended when I said: "you can call your festival 'screening', 'watching videocassettes' but don't call it a film festival. When so many people are invited to the opening of the festival and you offer low quality tapes downloaded from the internet and dubbed in Russian, it means you are not a lover of cinema, you have no respect for the visual image, the screen, or the audience. And this is not a film festival... Everything should be called by its proper name".

F.P.: Your evaluation of the Georgian audience.

In general, society is asleep. The key problem of our culture is zero curiosity and interest. However, there is a way out: better understanding. We should all participate in the process of understanding. We should introduce people to the good and interesting things which they are unaware of. We could even force them to watch worthwhile pieces of art! Cinemas in Georgia have lost their function. There are only a few cinemas in the country and the tickets are disproportionately expensive. Besides, films are screened in Russian. The majority of youngsters don't speak Russian, others express their protest by refusing to watch films dubbed in Russian. Frequently the translation is poor, and the films are bad. Many countries have suffered these problems, but the cinemas have started a revival there. I have witnessed how many people go to the cinema in Mexico or France. Yet I doubt that in the age of the iPhone cinemas will be as crowded as they used to be in the 1950s. Certainly, it is pleasant to watch films on a large screen, but iPhone screenings have more of a future in Georgia, whether we like it or not. I think eventually cinema will transform into the idea of a film museum and will be based on individual perception.

F.P.: Some people might say you should not only criticize BIAFF or consider the problems of cinema in general, but also write critical reviews of recent Georgian films, because your opinion is important for a lot of people in the field. Recently we met Shotiko Kalandadze in the lobby of the Georgian National Film Centre. He said: "The aim of film critics is to review films... Let's meet, arrange screenings and discuss them... "

A film critic is not a teacher! In the Soviet epoch we were obliged to attend screenings at the film studio. It was an honest attitude to our job. If similar screenings were organized now, I would simply have to attend all of them. I remember the Oberhausen festival where we asked the projectionist to stop a film about environmental protection because watching the vicious slaughter of animals was unbearable. It turned out that the director of the film was in the hall too. He complained and showed us the film again. He was right. Jury members should see every participating film from beginning to end. However, if you attend a festival as a film critic, knowing there are three hundred films screened in parallel and having to waste time on Kusturica's "Promise Me This", the film critic has the right to leave (Kusturica's film was my record: I left the hall in two and a half minutes). At a certain age you realize how limited you

Photo: Tato Kotetishvili

are in time and space. You understand that one lifetime may not be enough to watch all the films you would like to see. This is hard, even awful. Life is too short, so we should not waste it doing unpleasant things. There are still so many interesting films I have to see. For instance, I haven't seen all of Douglas Sirk's films. Some people would call this snobbism, but for me – it's a sad fact. Unfortunately, our obligations are not always pleasant. I hate to ask for favours, because I know other people are also limited in time and space. We should not ask people to do what we want them to. Everyone should be engaged in what they are interested in. I don't restrict my profession to Georgian films and I don't understand the question "Why Don't you write about me?!"

F.P.: However, it is the job of the film critic to write about bad films too...

Once I enjoyed criticizing low quality films. With time, I have begun to appreciate my time and hate to waste it on watching bad films. Let's leave that to young film critics. Unfortunately, the new generation lacks passion and courage. Some think it is easy to criticize films. They use clichés for evaluation, write a simple phrase - "bad taste" - and that's all. Just like in any field, we come across the problem of education. There were so many clichés uttered at the discussions of diploma theses that I said: "Don't get angry if film directors laugh at you and speak about how unprofessional film criticism is." The directors are right, and this is easily proved by the reviews by our film critics.

Sometimes the film is so bad that one doesn't know what to write. Sometimes it is vice versa. When I saw Zaza Urushadze's recent film "Karabakh 3" I had a strong desire to write a critical review. I even sent him a message telling I was going to write about his film. Now I regret not having written it. I didn't like the film and really wanted to criticize it.

F.P.: In spring you gave a lecture at the Goethe Institute in one of the projects,: Cinema as Museum. You said every bad film should be viewed in a certain context, and its value may change with time. For instance, "Where is Your Happiness, Mzia?", made in 1961 with Tskneti landscapes and environment, is interesting to watch today. In this way, every bad film has the prospect of becoming interesting in a certain way.

Yes, if we look at things in this way, it is possible that with time Shota Kalandadze's films will be of interest some day, but not as works of art. In this respect, time will not add any value to these films. They will be interesting from the documentary point of view, the same as chronicles... For example, we might be interested to see what Lia Kapanadze looked like many years ago.

F.P.: Could you share your idea of cinema as a museum with the readers of Film Print?

In the age of the iPhone the number of large cinemas is likely to decrease worldwide. There will be small film clubs and film museums will be set up. People will go there to watch films together.They will watch old films, even unpopular ones, as well as famous films that are also available on the Internet. But watching these films in a retrospective will add new context and meaning. There will be screenings and discussions, people will communicate by means of film. This is the tradition of a museum as such, as well as the tradition of film museums and cinematics, which was so popular in Georgia in the 1980s and 1990s. I think in the digital electronic age this is the only realistic way for film to develop. In my opinion, a film museum would be a good prospect in Georgia. It would be a popular, though non-commercial place. That's why the Ministry of Culture and the government should support the idea, because no businessman will invest in such projects.

>> Anuka Lomidze

"Thirty years ago Rezo Gabriadze and I traveled to the planet Plyuk. Then we wrote a script and told everyone what we had seen there. Now I have travelled to Plyuk for the second time, this time without Rezo Gabriadze... but with other friends. In my thoughts I have constantly asked for Rezo's advice. This is why I dedicate this film to my talented and unique friend Rezo Gabriadze". **Giorgi Danelia**

T T

>> Elena Mashkova-Sulakadze

Long ago Giorgi Danelia invented a story and dedicated a film to his son - Kolka.

But Kolka never saw the film, even though "Kin-Dza-Dza!" became a so-called cult film for his generation.

I have often thought whether Kolka would have liked the film. His father tried to speak to him as if they were the same age. He wanted to prove he could think in an original way and make strange, mystical and philosophical films. He tried to prove he was young, mischievous and disobedient, the same as his son. He wanted his son to like the film!

Now Giorgi Danelia's first animated film "Ku! Kin-Dza-Dza!" has been created, and I would refuse to call it a cartoon.

I will not dwell on the technical details, but as usual, Danelia has made a film which is unlike all other films made so far.

I imagine how difficult it was for his counterparts – animation director Tatyana Ilyina and genius artist (oh, how easy it is to tell the truth!) Alexander Khramtsov – to break their own stereotypes. But Giorgi Danelia's talent enchants and impresses everyone! His new colleagues trusted him, believed in him and made a magnificent film, a kind of anti-cartoon. Comparisons to the "Kin-Dza-Dza" film are not justified! These are two entirely different pieces of art, being similar only in the story line.

Two earthmen find themselves "relocated" to a strange planet. In their attempts to return home, they have numerous sad, funny and unbelievable adventures, get acquainted with charming villains – aliens Bi and Wef, vagabond actors who earn their living by atonal mourning chants (Krzysztof Penderecki can have a rest!).

At first sight, there is still a lot in common: the inhabitants of Plyuk blow "Pzh's Last Breath" in the same way, match-sticks are still valuable (Kts), the status of people in this alien community is defined by the colour of their trousers, the society is still divided into Chatlans (higher race) and Patsaks (lower race). The governor of the planet – Pzh – appears unexpectedly to supervise life on the planet. Everyone loves him, some even more (Ku!) than others. They declare this aloud, just in case he is not a hologram. They know he watches everyone and sees everything.

But this is purely a visual resemblance. It is a Danelian and yet a non-Danelian film!

The characters are different, the time is different too. A hopeless time! Honest engineer Vladimir Mashkov is now a world-famous cellist Vladimir Chizhov, abandoned by his wife (who has left him for Zegenbogen – not a banker but a flautist, which is less offensive – at least his nephew Tolik thinks so). The romantic, polite and ridiculous student "violinist" Gedevan Aleksidze is now prospective DJ Anatoli Tsarapkin – a smart fellow who easily adjusts to the new reality on planet Plyuk. The time is different and so our characters are different too.

Even in Danelia's most tragic and sad films (my favourite is "Tears Kept Rolling") there is still hope. The splinter

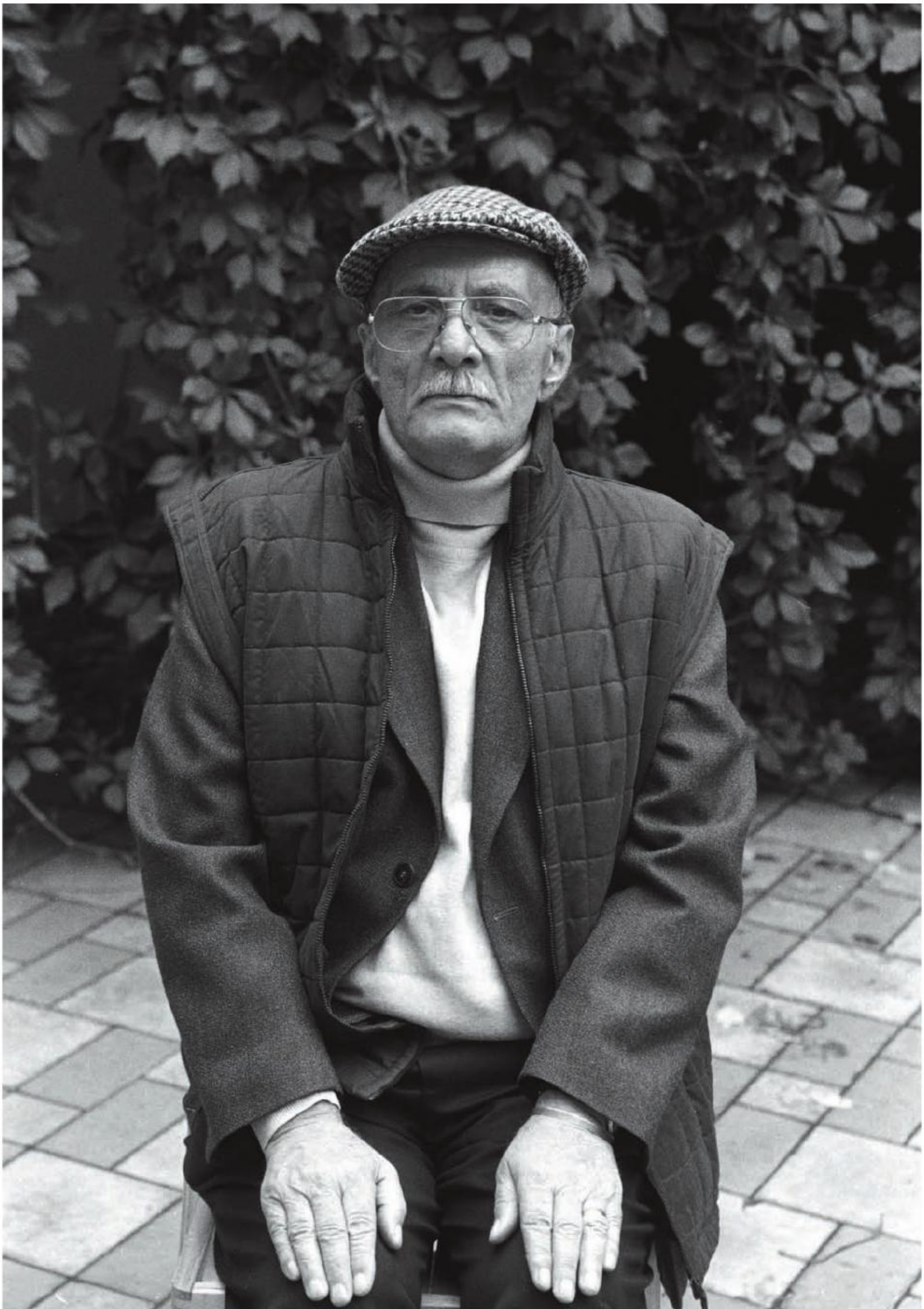

Photo: Yuri Rost

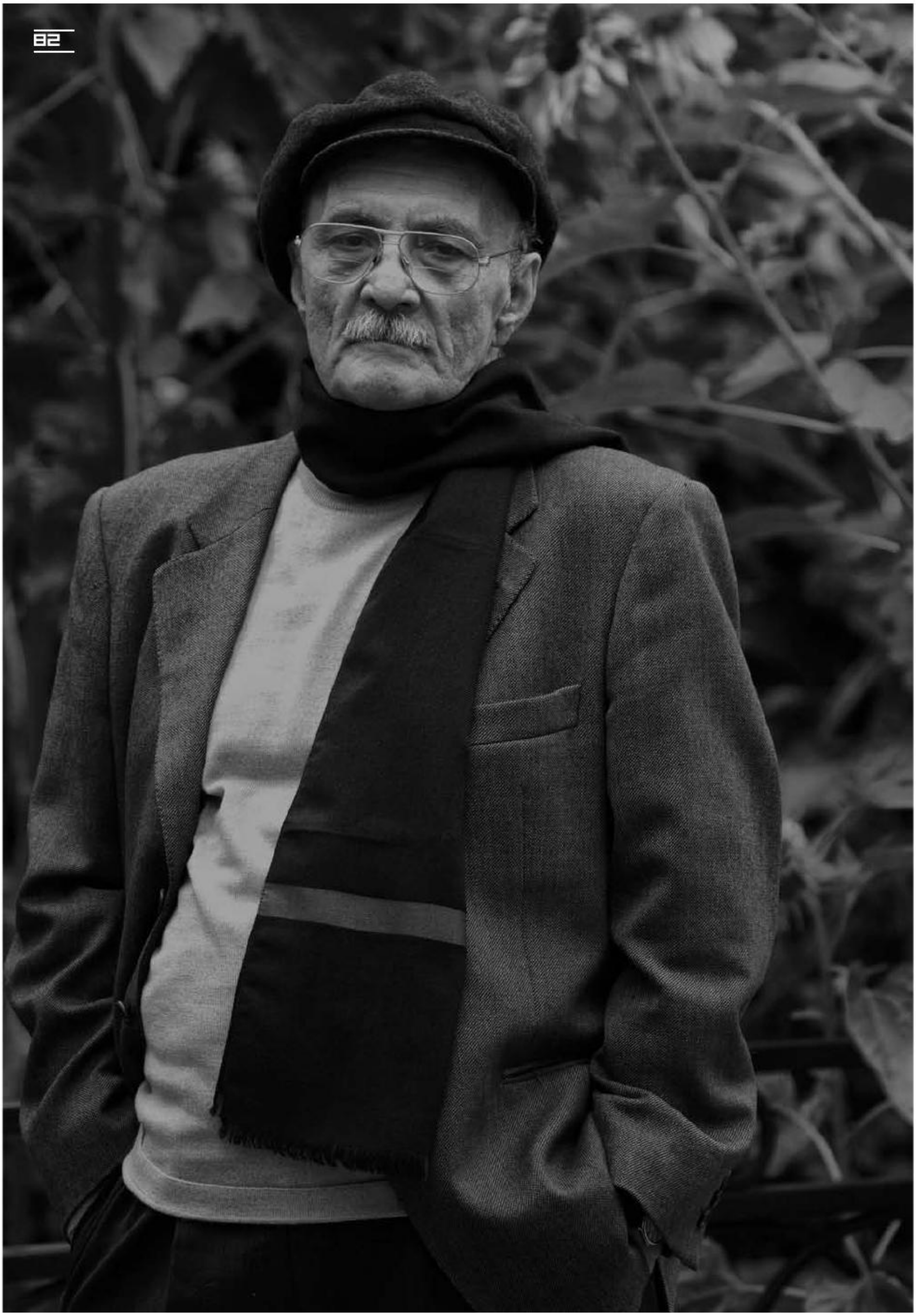

Photo: Yuri Rost

“I made this animation because I wanted to. As for remakes, they are not the invention of our times. They are something that began long ago. You just have to remember “The Magnificent Seven” – the remake of the Japanese “Seven Samurai”. By the way, I have seen both films and I can say with great confidence that the American film differs from the Japanese one much less than the animation “Ku! Ki-Dza-Dza” differs from the feature film “Kin-Dza-Dza!” **Giorgi Danelia**

of an aberrating mirror falls out with a tear, and Pavel Ivanovich Vasin (Yevgeni Leonov) becomes generous again!

At the end of the film appears Katya (Yevgenya Simonova in the film “Afonya”) – the sun-ray in the gloomy life of Afonya Borshchev. There will be light and everything will change for better – we should believe in this. There will be the pure note sounding in the soul of the villain. The main thing is to achieve this sound, to find and hear it, to develop the ear to hear it, and to develop the skills of hope, inspiration, replacement of the dark with light, evil with good, the belief that there is more good than evil in every person... On having watched Danelia’s film we want to go on living, knowing and believing that miracles exist, and the world is going to be a better place... In “Kin-Dza-Dza” the aliens became so humane that they even sacrificed their lives (and turned into cactuses on the Alph planet) in order to return the engineer Vladimir Mashkov and the “violinist” Gedevan Alexidze to the earth.

In “Ku! Kin-Dza-Dza!” the villains remain unchanged, although they are very charming villains...

“Kin-Dza-dza!” warned us of what might happen to people and to the earth if we follow the road to the Plyuk planet, the planet without seas and forests, with only sand and air remaining... and soon the air will be sufficient only for the chosen ones...

The film “Ku! Kin-Dza-Dza” is a diagnosis, a verdict: There is no hope! Only those who have retained at least two “Kts” will survive, the others will perish!

They will not return home... and the camel will have some relief!”

You see, I cannot avoid comparisons.

Abstracts from conversations with Danelia:

“The planet Plyuk is devoid of forests, seas, rivers, grass, flowers and trees – everything has been annihilated. The residents are immoral, shameless and devoid of any dignity. Instead they are full of violence, greed, treason, cowardice and flattery... Their vocabulary consists of a single word – KU. The population is divided into two races: the Chatlans (higher race) and Patsaks (lower race). Unfortunately, nowadays it is easier to understand them.”

“Neither the engineer Mashkov or the student Gedeon are heroes of their age. The cellist Chizhov and DJ Tolik are just a cellist and a DJ. The heroes of the age no longer walk in the streets: they attend meetings.”

“If the characters had remained unchanged it would have been the same film, although animated. Characters like Gedeon are rare and unique nowadays. Gedeon has been replaced by Tolik – a contemporary guy who never makes mistakes and cannot be cheated. He easily adjusted to Plyuk too.”

კინოთეატრი

T T P C

>> Tornike Adamashvili

I have often been asked recently: What is regional cinema? How can regional cinema develop in a country which hardly has a film industry at all? I admit I have discussed these issues in detail with so many people that I hardly have enough energy to speak about them with people who are experienced in the field. In this regard I am like Milos Forman's character in "Taking off" from 1971. When the time comes for him to sing, he is unable to make a sound, so he asks for permission to sing later.

I don't mean that everyone needs an explanation of what regional cinema is. Simply, this issue is always discussed emotionally... either when we agree that the issue is important, or when it is argued that the time for regional cinema has not yet come, meaning due to social problems and the lack of a central (if we may use this term) film industry... The lack of state or private support for filmmaking is also frequently mentioned. Another related issue is the lack of professionals ("Everyone imagines themselves a director", it is said). Yet another important problem is the bad taste of the audience, which prefers to watch "foreign rubbish".... In short, there is self-criticism everywhere.

However, everyone agrees that cinema is a field that should be viewed from various angles: it is a most complex and decentralized entity. We cannot say that filmmaking is only shooting or only distribution, that it involves only the crew or the audience, only a film or a cinema. Hence, none of the separate aspects can develop filmmaking as a whole. We cannot forecast the results of the complex development of the film industry. We cannot explain this to the society or the government.

I remember watching an Iranian film at the Batumi International Film Festival in 2011. It was Vahid Musayan's "Golchereh Movie Theater". The main character, who is battling to restore the cinema, has a meeting with the Minister of Culture. There is war in Afghanistan. The Minister looks at the visitor amazed and asks in all seriousness: "You really want to open a cinema?" This strange question was followed by laughter from the audience. The film was highly appreciated by the festival audience and the Jury awarded it the main prize, although it did not have much coverage in the media. Neither was there any mention of this episode, although the story of the film resembled Georgian reality. We also face the dilemma faced by the main character of this film: we have to answer the question "What do we need cinema for?"

We should leave alone the discussion of economic issues or filmmaking problems and ask a general question: What does cinema mean for our country? Therefore, I will not restrict myself to discussing only regional cinema, although I will focus on this issue in the given article. However, I will start by analyzing the attitude to cinema and underline that there are both significant and seemingly insignificant problems related to cinema.

Currently we often talk about film production and distribution, the latter meaning the terms offered by the central cinemas and participation in international festivals. What are we going to do with the audience? Why do we screen Georgian films only on TV? Films certainly represent the country internationally, but

what about the national audience? What is the sense of Cristian Mungiu discussing the cultural problems of Romania if national films are only seen and discussed abroad? This reminds me of the great respect for Soviet dissidents abroad, while their influence inside the country was minimal. Will Europe be interested in our films if they are outside the national context? Will foreigners invest in these films and watch them with interest? Fashions change rapidly you know...

This attitude to films gives rise to the phenomenon of elitism with regard to films and filmmakers. When we justify this attitude by saying "This film is meant for a foreign audience" or "We can do nothing about expensive cinema tickets", we should not be surprised at the low level of audience interest in local films. Films should be made available and tangible for the audience (in this case I mean both in the financial aspects and in the content of films).

As for regional cinema: there is frequent discussion on what the financing should be spent on. In this regard, there are two viewpoints: those of filmmakers and those of the audience. Filmmakers are eager to make films under normal working conditions. But there are also the interests of the audience, which nowadays are completely ignored. Filmmakers are satisfied when their works are financed and distributed internationally and locally (in cinemas or on TV). The audience has its legitimate claims regarding the availability of films. At present the Georgian audience has no access to films, whether they are national or foreign productions! I mean a large portion of the population in cities and the majority of the population in the regions. I hope the term "regional cinema" is gradually becoming clear. The audience has a degraded perception of films, and this is largely due to the TV or other media channels.

Filmmakers would certainly be pleased to have a local audience, just as the population would be pleased to watch local films. There is no opposition of sides, but both sides are affected, with the audience being completely neglected and attention being focused only on the interests of filmmakers. However, it is the task of filmmakers to explain to society the importance of cinema and persuade the authorities that development of cinema is significant not only for the promotion of Georgia abroad, but also for the development of culture as such. Paradoxically enough, film critics should also be considered as the audience, as their function is not only to review local films (which is a rarity nowadays), but also to establish links between the society and cinema. When the public is alienated from active film culture, they lose interest in film criticism too. Therefore we should not be surprised at the scarcity and unpopularity of film magazines or film-related programs.

To put it bluntly, we should not be surprised at the unpopularity of cinema in general, or the lack of public support for filmmaking. The state supports other cultural activities to a greater extent than the film industry, because film production is not the requirement of society. If films are not available for the audience, the latter has no demand with regard to the development of the field. Therefore, in my opinion, filmmakers should do their best to explain to society the importance and meaning of cinema.

To remember Fellini's "Orchestra Rehearsal": we don't need to underline the importance of our separate instruments i.e. the scripts and projects. These discussions will go on endlessly unless we show the potential of the entire orchestra. The audience has to see films, whether old, new, foreign or local. Only by seeing films will the audience understand the meaning of cinema!

Municipal cinemas

A municipal cinema means a non-commercial, non-profit cinema supported by local municipalities or other external sources. They have a certain income, which may be used for the development of the given field. Municipal theaters are quite widespread in Europe. Their aim is to promote creative cinema. On May 30th a conference "Municipal Cinema and its Development" was held at the Goethe Institute. Information about the conference is available on the organizer's website – the Tbilisi International Prometheus Film Festival. 28 regional representatives took part in the conference. They are ready and willing to contribute to the solving of the problem ifthere is certain assistance and coordination on the part of the film organizations. The guests of the conference were representatives of the German municipal cinema network – Cornelia Klaus and Cristiane Schleinder, who willingly shared their experience in the field. Many interesting things can be recalled regarding the conference, but I will briefly say that it is quite possible to establish a network of municipal cinemas in our country if their function is social and cultural rather than just film-oriented as it is in Europe. We should not forget that in Europe there are a large number of modern cultural and social centers. We could use the lack of these centers in the regions and thus make a combination of municipal cinema with open cultural and conference spaces. Local libraries and history museums fail to perform the function of modern cultural centers. And in any case, they are unpopular with the local communities.

Who can support municipal cinemas?

When the social importance of cinema is made clear, it no longer depends on self-governaning bodies or cultural institutions. Responsibility is distributed equally throughout the entire society. This is a question of demand. Municipal cinemas are a responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Ministries of Probation, Economy and Tourism. All these ministries should be interested in meetings, screenings and conferences held at municipal cinemas and contribute a certain portion of their budget to the development of such cinemas.

Municipal cinemas will be a meeting place for government and non-governmental organizations in the region, and films will be allowed to concentrate on a variety of themes and issues. Festivals could be organized with the involvement of organizations working in the given field. The network of municipal cinemas will be important for film distribution and film critics. It will allow regular discussions, the reading of film-related literature (including this magazine) and film screenings. Films will be included in the educational programs. Here we should underline the role of films in children's education. It is well-known that children perceive 80% of information visually. The adult population in the regions constantly complains of the lack of entertainment and information. Even access to the internet is a problem in the regions. From the point of view of migration, the abovementioned factor may be significant in slowing the outflow of the population, as the majority of youngsters emigrate from the villages to towns due to the dull life and lack of cultural events.

What are the sources of income for municipal cinemas in the regions? Who will go to the cinema? These are the frequently asked questions. The number of children attending the screenings alone is enough to overfill the cinemas. Other age groups are also interested. Besides, the ticket price would be low and appropriate for the situation in the regions. Film products will acquire a new way of increasing their sales. All this is indeed worth the individual investments. If the network of cinemas is administered with the status of a non-profit legal entity, the source of revenue will be cheap tickets, low tax, popcorn or bar, plus advertising activities based on deals with the private sector. This revenue may be used for further development of the network.

Recently there has been much discussion about changes to be made with regard to art and charity. Municipal cinemas will allow sponsors and donors to carry out significant activities in this area. Municipal cinemas might also be interesting from the viewpoint of tourism: tourists might visit cinemas with thematic names, offering local films and other film-related programs. This will promote Georgian films and culture worldwide. Diplomatic services and foreign cultural representatives may also be involved in these activities. Countries with rich cinematographic heritage might want to be involved in the arrangement of cinema lobbies and programs. This will be favourable for the development of bilateral cultural relations between countries.

Thus, the organizations involved in the development of municipal cinemas are: 1. Bodies of local self-governance. 2. The central authorities. 3. Local or other private sector. 4. NGOs and international organizations. What should be done to move things in this direction? Above all, filmmakers should be active and persuade all sides of the importance and scope of the issue. Film organizations should be involved in the coordination and supervision of the processes. The current situation is similar in all the regions: the majority of buildings no longer belong to the local authorities. However, there are alternative buildings such as Houses of Culture, museums and libraries.

People involved in this field often say that quality screening is expensive, and that this affects the interests of filmmakers by hampering distribution. However, they forget about the audience – the ordinary audience who want to see films. Such an audience has the same claims as film society. The audience may want to turn little clubs into independent cinemas. If there is demand, we will no longer hear tragic-comic questions such as "Do you really want to open a cinema?"

The issue should be studied thoroughly, and basic research and negotiations should be undertaken in order to identify where and how films can be screened. Later, when local organizations and populations become more active, we can talk about further development. In an environment where people ask: "What do we need cinema for?" it is hard to make a sound, just like the character in "Taking Off" whose parents don't want their child to sing. The most urgent task is to avoid questions about the necessity of cinemas. Everything else is possible. We asked Cornelia Klaus what we could do about the dilapidated building of a cinema in Mtskheta. She said: "Sweep the floor and screen a film." This is how it all started long ago in run-down basements...

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In every culture and, correspondingly, in every cinema, the role of women is frequently pre-defined: a woman is either a charming object, or a fighter, a Hero of Socialist Labour, a marginal figure, and, of course, her main function (or rather obligation) is that of Mother! How do women manage to escape from the restrictions of the patriarchal culture? What are the chief archetypes in Georgian films? Film historian Teo Khatiashvili talks about these and other issues...

F.P. Women in Georgian Films – this is what I have called this interview: actresses, characters, archetypes and stereotypes in Georgian culture, as well as recent developments in this area...

The image of women in early Georgian films does not differ much from their image in other cultures. The entire culture of humankind still remains a masculine-patriarchal one. Women are overshadowed by men and have a secondary function. They may sometimes be the main character, but, as a rule, this is construed on the basis of a male viewpoint. This is especially true in melodrama which is a so-called "female" genre. Feminist critics argue that in melodrama a woman is a pseudo-centre, i.e. she seems to be the main character and the entire dramaturgy is built around her, but the ideology is strictly masculine. The intrigue of a melodrama develops in such a way that the woman is totally eliminated. The elimination, or death of a woman may be viewed in two ways: physical and spiritual. In a love triangle, so characteristic of melodrama, a woman forms a threat to a man, the integrity of the family and traditional values. Thus, the woman should be avoided. A patriarchal culture punishes the woman. The femme fatal dies in the end and this solves the problem: the man returns to his wife who is generous, noble, tender, etc. Another dramaturgical pattern is where the vicious woman is spiritually transformed. She understands that the most important factor in her life is the man she loves. So she sacrifices her principles, independence and activities for the sake of love. This transformation may be termed "The Taming of the Shrew", because a vicious and femme fatal turns into a tender, obedient and

"Bi Green Valley",
Actress Lia Kapanadze

caring one. In this case we witness the spiritual "death" of the woman.

F.P. Let's start from the beginning, Georgian cinema of the 1920s...

Georgian films of the 1920s may seem paradoxical in this respect: on the one hand, we se Georgia as a country of patriarchal culture, where women are hardly represented. On the other hand, Georgian films of this period are concentrated on the image of women. However, we should observe how women are represented. Of course, we should take into account the ideological context of the young revolutaionary state. In this period, films were chiefly based on literary sources, reflecting social hardships and patriarchal tradition, which frequently oppresses women. The pathos of the film is the hard situation of women prior to the socialist revolution and their happiness after the revolution. There are lots of examples, it is enough to remember Nato Vachnadze, who created the most impressive images of women in Georgian films.

F.P. However, in Nikoloz Shengelaya's "Eliso", also created in the 1920s, the main character played by Kira Andronikashvili is a strong, emancipated woman....

The dynamics of women's images in the films of the 1920s and 1930s are very interesting: ideological accents changed rapidly within a few years. By the end of the 1920s women become more active, as the Georgian screen needed to reflect the struggling character of women of that era. Nato Vachnadze, who earlier played the roles of oppressed and weak women, was strong and emancipated in "The Last Crusaders". Certainly, "Eliso" is also very important, not only because of its general pathos, but also because of its new interpretation of a woman's role. It should also be mentioned that Nikoloz Shengelaya changed the ending of the literary source. In Kazbegi's work, Eliso goes to be with her beloved man, whereas in the film she stays to struggle for the welfare of her village. I think this change reflects the spirit of the young leftist directors, Nikoloz Shengelaya being one of them. These directors were influenced by Russian poetic-editing cinema, especially Eisenstein, whose main principle was "One for all and all for one". This principle of unity formed part of the Soviet ideology, where a collective opinion prevailed over the individual one and public interests were more important than private life. For Eliso, the support and solidarity of her villagers and the struggle against injustice is more important than "melodramatic sentiments", called "acid tears of weakness" in one of Shengelaya's poems.

F.P. The first Soviet female director – Nutsa Ghoghoberidze – also appeared in the 1920s. She created her first film "Their Kingdom" at the age of 25 in cooperation with Mikheil Kalatozishvili. Her first independent work was "Buba". Unfortunately, we have little information about her....

Western scholars have long dealt with this issue of why history knows so little about women. Women did play an important role in historic events, but they were frequently "swallowed up" by culture. Nutsa Ghoghoberidze's story is an illustration of this. Even filmmakers know very little about her. Her contribution is unknown due to a complicated historical situation. This confirms how women are perceived in our culture...

F.P. What is the image of woman in the 1930s, i.e. in the era of the so-called "Stalinist myths" in cinema?

The 1930s are a period of complete victory for the socialist revolution. All the enemies of revolution are annihilated: the Mensheviks, White Guardists, and the Kulaks are eliminated and there is "Paradise on earth" for the Soviet people. Even if there are some shadows of enemies, they are easily avoided. All the people, including women, are involved in the building of the happy Soviet State. Soviet ideology viewed both men and women as details of a Soviet mechanism. Therefore, they are equally represented in the films of this period. These films featured genderless women inspired by faith in the Communist party.

F.P. Women in Georgian films are nearly always represented from a masculine viewpoint, to say nothing of the directors' subjective vision: the image of woman is conditioned by the era and the culture. Female main characters such as Maya Tskneteli, Magdana and Otaraant Kvrivi are strong, struggling women, often resembling men. Female features are rarely represented. The only exception in this regard is Lana Ghoghoberidze....

Initially I was rather critical about

"Some Interviews
on Personal Metters",
Actress Sofiko Chiaureli

"The Fathers Killer",
Actress Nato Vachnadze

Lana Ghoghoberidze's works, as I thought they were too lyrical. However, with time I have come to appreciate her films more and more. Lana was not ashamed of being a woman and never tried to be like a man. Frequently women who have achieved success in films, politics and other fields try to resemble men, thus losing their feminine charm (not in the sense of being weak, gentle and obedient) and cease to identify themselves with other women. Lana Ghoghoberidze is an exception. She reflected every problem and theme from a female viewpoint: she tried to show the audience the diverse interests of women and underlined that just the role of mother has never been sufficient for a woman. On the contrary, motherhood is frequently a burden, preventing a woman from being an important member of society. In this regard, we should above all mention "Several Interviews on Personal Issues".

F.P. Sopiko Chiaureli's character in this film is criticized by the public, husband and other members of her family for being actively involved in public life. One needs courage to play the role of a person who has fallen out of the general context and opposes widely-accepted norms....

Certainly, closed societies hate exceptional peple, whether they are men or women. However, with time, the society starts to appreciate these people, as they contribute to the development of culture. As a rule, a person violating the accepted norms is marginalized. This mechanism affects women all the more, as there are more restrictions and prohibitions with regard to women. Thus, a woman who fails to follow the established routine and norms is severely

criticized and needs to make double the effort to assert herself.

F.P. Let's move on to the 1960s... For example, Eldar Shengelaya's works where women are the backgound of a man...

The 60s generation made significant changes in cinema. You have mentioned heroic women of the 1930s, but this generation of directors destroyed myths and brought real people to the fore. The characters of these films are not idealized, unlike the Soviet ones. However, you are right in saying that the role of women is secondary. Once again, this is a problem of our culture. In the West, where things started to move forward in the 1950s, the new generation re-evaluated many things, including gender roles. This is absent in Georgian films, the only exception being Merab Kokochashvili's Great Green Valley, which unveiled the taboo of female sexuality.

F.P. Let's remember Tenghiz Abuladze's "Other's Children", the generosity of Nato opposed to the femme femme fatalTeo.

In my opinion, this is the best of Tengiz Abuladze's films. Amazing empathy (which is so rare in contemporary Georgian cinema), simplicity, vivid characters and images make this film an outstanding work of Georgian cinema of the 1960s. However, the image of a femme fatal Teo is present in this film too. The danger of this woman is opposed to Nato's positive female features. Teo's character is not developed in the film, but fits into the above-mentioned criteria: a woman as a threat to a man and his family, whose magic spell makes the main character abandon his children. The archetype of a strong, protective father is very important in traditional cultures. Therfore, the negative image of Teo is underlined. Even her "Southern" appearance (dark skin, large black eyes and thick lips) is characteristic of a passionate woman. However, the image of a femme fatal is undeveloped in Georgian cinema due to at least two factors: traditional Georgian culture and Soviet morality. Initially, the revolution also meant a sexual revolution (for example, the bold and radical texts of Alexandra Kollontai, one of the representatives of feminist ideology). With time, a patriarchal order was established and the great chieftain turned into the sole sexual object. In this period a fear of eroticism took hold.

F.P. Who are the femme fatals in Georgian films?

There aren't any. The genre of melodrama focusing on the femme fatal is not developed either. In this case we should once again remember Soviet ideolgy. Private life was to all intents and purposes neglected. Melodrama, which is based on a personal drama and love relationships, did not meet the requirements of Soviet ideology. Even if there is love in Soviet Georgian films, it is influenced by ideology.

F.P. The few erotic characters in Georgian films are of Slavic appearance... For instance, Rezo Esadze's "Love at First Sight".

Woman as an erotic symbol is often identified with a "foreigner". The femme fatals in Western films are often oriental, i.e. exotic. In the case of Georgia, this is also due to the problem of casting: Georgian actresses often refused to perform these roles. The Georgian actress who played such a role in "Great Green Valley" was criticized and rebuked by the public for a long time... In "Data Tutashkhia" there is an episode in which a girl named Kiku gets undressed. I was a child when this film was first screened and I remember how critical the public was of the "shameless" actress... The directors were also part of this culture and mentality. For Georgian directors, women are, above all, associated with motherhood and sanctity.

F.P. In contemporary Georgian cinema there is a talented group of female directors, especially in the documentary field...

It is too early to speak of any tendency. These female directors have to create at least 2-3 films. I cannot say whether this increase in the number of female directors is a mere coincidence or whether it is conditioned by certain factors. One of the peculiarities of "feminine" vision is concentration on the seemingly insignificant. In this respect, we witness "feminine" vision in Salome Jashi's "Bakhmaro", which is entirely based on observation. The dull routine of a provincial town is the main theme of Nino Orjonikidze's "English Teacher".

F.P. You mentioned observation... I would like to remember Rusudan Chkonia's "Keep Smiling" in this regard, which perfectly fits into the famous theory of feminist film critic

"Someone Else's Children",
Actress Tsitsino Tsitsishvili

"Last Crusaders",
Actress Nato Vachnadze

Laura Mulvay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". The visual aspect of the film lies in the concept of "Women Under Observation".

Rusudan Chkonia's film is a feminist movie in which women are viewed through the lens of the masculine world. Despite the different social status and background of the main characters, all of them are victims of a masculine culture which turns women into part of a decoration. Beyond the myth of "Mother Georgia", i.e.the superficial "cosmetic smile", nobody is interested in the problems and inner pains of women.

F.P. Is there a concept of feminine cinema or is it just a label given by patriarchal culture?

I am not a fan of this term. As a rule, it is used ironically and in a negative context, meaning sentimental, sweet films. Anyway, speaking of feminine cinema, I would distinguish a feminine vision of the world, real feelings and emotions of women and not those imposed by male directors. We criticize patriarchal culture because it has restricted the role of women, viewing them solely as mothers. Contemporary feminist scholars argue that the gift of motherhood defines woman's psychology and attitudes. While man is more aggressive and achieves everything by means of struggle and oppression, a woman is more diplomatic and solves every problem by avoiding conflicts, because she has the instinct of a mother – the instinct that makes her save every living creature. That is why women battle to make the world more confortable and protected. Men aspire to the top of the hierarchy, whereas women prefer an even, horizontal spectrum where everyone has a distinguished role and function.

>> Nino Kavtaradze

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D —

The Georgian Filmmakers' Union was established in 1965. The first Chairman of the Union was film director Siko Dolidze. In 1976 Eldar Shengelaya was elected Chairman. In 1991 the Georgian Filmmakers' Union became independent from the Soviet Filmmakers' Union. This organization is made up of 350 people working in various spheres of cinema. The Filmmakers' Union is located at the Cinema House in Rustaveli Avenue. This is the building where premieres of Georgian films used to be held, and meetings with crews and anniversaries of filmmakers were organized. Other events arranged by the Union were the first all-union Amirani student film festival "Golden Eagle", the first international symposium of female film directors, a retrospective of films in the Moscow Film Museum Archive and numerous other events. The Large Hall of the Cinema House was the first to organize retrospectives by Fassbinder, Pasolini, Welles, Fellini, Visconti, Rossellini, Godard, Truffot and other outstanding directors. It was difficult to get tickets for these screenings, and the hall was permanently overcrowded. Over the past 10 years nothing important has happened at the Filmmakers' Union. The Large Hall is dilapidated, while the Small Hall moved from the fifth floor to the ground floor and is also in poor condition. The canteen does not function. The entire first floor is rented out. Probably due to poor management, this multifunctional building in the centre of the city is practically unused. In April 2013 a new Chairman of the Filmmakers Union was elected. After two stages of elections Zaza Urushadze was elected Chairman. We interviewed him about his plans and his vision for the future of the Union...

F.P. What did the Filmmakers Union mean to you in the past?

I'm 46, so I don't remember what the Union used to be like in the past. For me it was a space which screened quality films. It was hard to attend these screenings, they were like forbidden fruit at that time, especially for me – a guy who was not born into a family of filmmakers.

F.P. So you don't remember the Thursday events organized by the Union? We gathered in the Small Hall on the fifth floor. Directors and film critics discussed new films, diploma works or debut films. Directors willingly brought their films and listened to frank criticism and comments. It was a unique cinematographic space which has been lost for over 10 years. Why have we lost this space? I don't mean only the dilapidated building.

In the past few years I was lucky to make a number of films, both full length features and TV series like Hot Dog. So it's hard for me to sit in the office. However, my new job at the Union resembles the process of creating a new film. I want to enliven the space and make it interesting for filmmakers. I'm happy when I'm shooting films. Why did I accept this position? Because I have energy and a great

Photo: Tato Kotetishvili

desire to restore this space. We do need a place where we can gather and arrange screenings, discussions, debates and meetings. I want to rebrand the Union into a film academy. I want to change the name not only because the Filmmakers Union is a remnant of the Soviet past, but also because I think the Film Academy should be made up of professional guilds. It's also possible to update the existing Academy established by Rezo Chkheidze, Dodo Okujava, Olga Tabukashvili and others. We have to think it over. We should restore the Large and Small Halls of the cinema house, as well as the film museum and library. There should be a café and a restaurant where meals are cheap and Georgian filmmakers can invite foreign producers for discussions in a friendly and informal environment.

F.P. Should film critics take an active part in this? Our profession seems to have lost its function. But it's hard to discuss the future of cinema without criticism, analysis and observation of current processes.

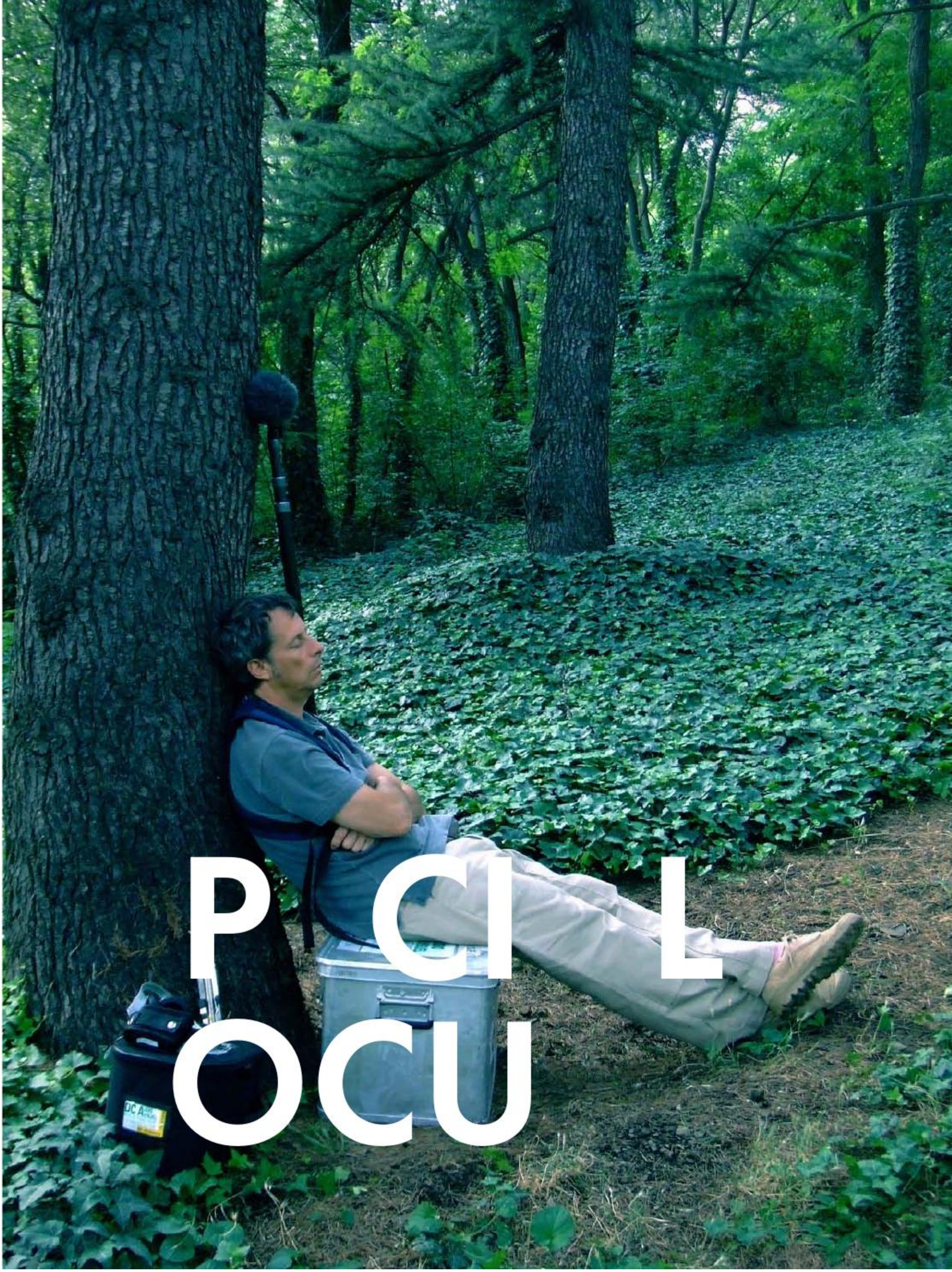
I agree. Debates about contemporary Georgian films are absolutely necessary. We should arrange meetings with the audience, frank discussions of current problems, not only in Tbilisi but also in the regions. The audience needs to return to the cinemas. That's why I am in a hurry to reconstruct the Large Hall. It may sound like a dream, but it's an urgent task. We should restore the tradition of having premieres of Georgian films in this hall. We should also organize educational events for schoolchildren. The Filmmakers' Union should also be involved in these activities. We can offer screenings for children at a token price. In this way the audience will get accustomed to watching quality films. We can also arrange retrospectives of classical films in the Small Hall for a completely token price – 1 GEL.

F.P. You mentioned youngsters and I have a question about this: the members of the Filmmakers' Union are not young. There was a time when membership of the Union was respectable and hard to attain. You had to be a well-known and successful filmmaker to become a member. What's the situation today?

We reviewed the criteria of membership and updated them. At the first Board meeting arranged after the Congress we granted membership of the Union to many young people, e.g. Ia Sukhitashvili, Levan Koghiashvili... I will not list everyone now. Young people should be motivated to become members of the Union. It has to be an interesting space for them. This is my aim and I will put all my energy into achieving it. I certainly won't be able to reach this goal alone. We should all be working to update this space. We should start by doing concrete things, not just observing the situation. There is such a lot to do!

>> Nino Mkheidze

Photo: Tato Kotetishvili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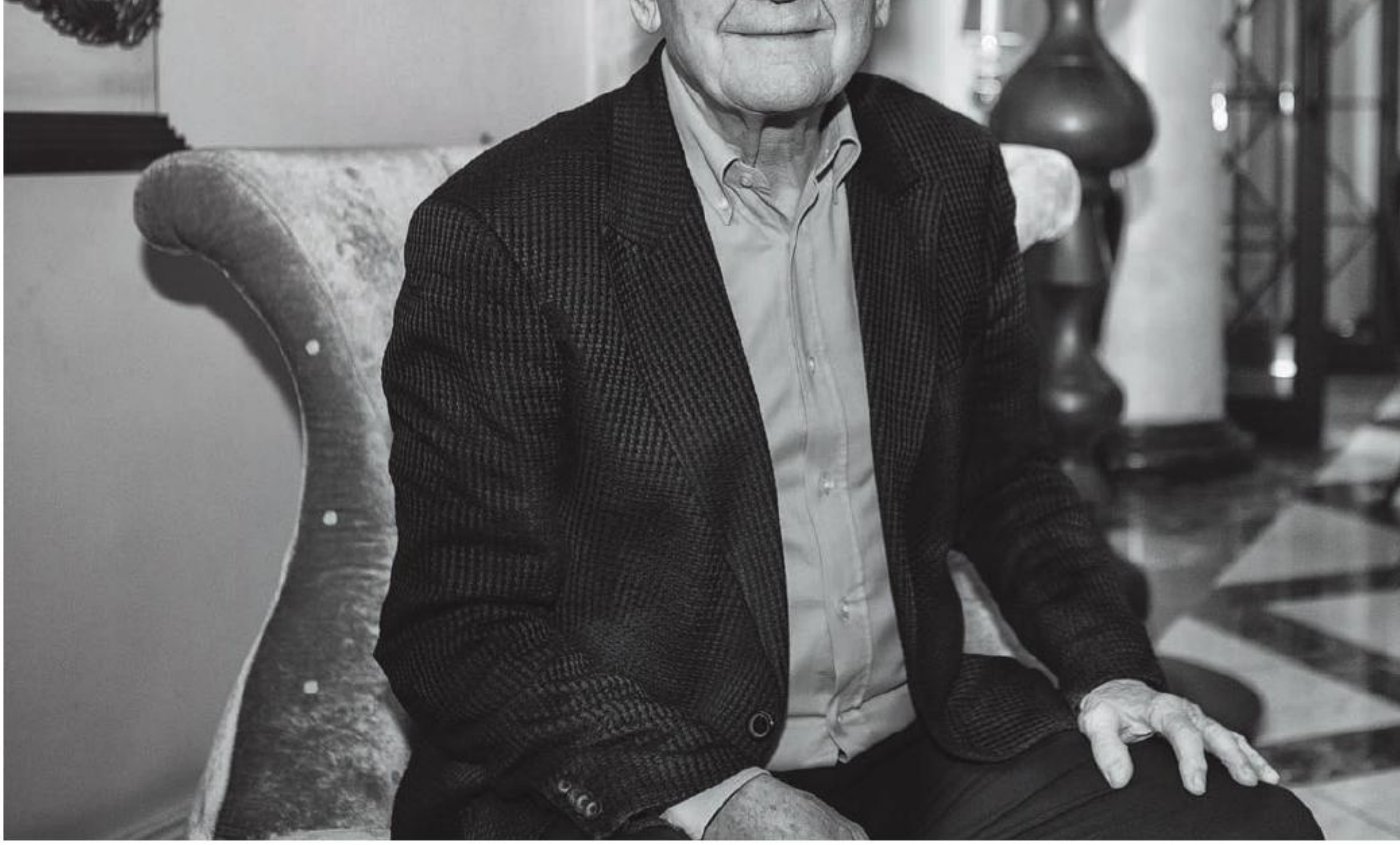


Photo: Tako Robakidze

P

FP: Good morning, Mr. Plog. We are very happy to meet you. The visit of the President of Eurimages is a significant event for the Georgian film industry. Please tell us about the purpose of your visit.

The purpose of my visit is to meet Georgian filmmakers and the Minister of Culture and tell them about the goals of Eurimage, as well as to confirm our readiness for mutual cooperation.

FP: Yesterday you met Georgian filmmakers and talked to the Minister of Culture. Have you outlined any future plans? What is Georgia's potential with regard to the European Film Support Foundation?

I am very optimistic about Georgia's future in Eurimages, although it has only been one of our members for two years. Eurimages financed a Georgian project before the country became a member. This means that we have supported Georgia before and will continue to do so. Since Georgia became a member of Eurimage we have financed three Georgian projects and these films have been successful at a number of international festivals. The Georgian cinematographic tradition is widely known. So, in my opinion, the country has great potential for cooperation with other European countries.

FP: Eurimage has existed as an institute since 1988. After the disintegration of the socialist bloc it increased in size and currently includes other Eastern European countries as well as Georgia. You have been President of Eurimages since 2009. Please tell us about the structural changes that have been made in recent years.

Only the countries of the European Council are eligible for Eurimages membership. They also have to meet certain requirements and have their own film industry. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the post-Soviet states became members of the European Council. So if they are interested in Eurimages membership, the Assembly will consider the issue. Georgia joined Eurimages soon after Russia. The list of our member countries has grown significantly and currenty includes 36 countries. It is planned that Armenia and Azerbaijan will join us soon. We are already negotiating this with Armenia, although we have not reached final agreement yet. Anyway, we view these two Caucasian countries as potential members.

As I mentioned, the number of member countries has grown in recent years. This has brought about changes in the management structure. For instance, it is impossible to consider each project in the presence of representatives from all member countries. So when an application is submitted, it is first considered by a working group consisting of representatives from eight countries. Any country may be on the committee, but the make-up changes according to the project. The members of the working group do not take decisions, they just work out recommendations for the project and send these recommendations to the General Assembly, which takes the final decision. Generally the Assembly follows the recommendations of the working group. Of course, this mechanism facilitates the working process.

Eurimages provides additional financing. According to its regulations, 51% of project costs have to be provided by the project country. Another criterion is the distribution of the film in its own country as well as in the co-production countries. If a project fails to meet these requirements, it will not be financed.

The annual budget of Eurimages is 25 million Euros and this is provided by the membership fees. The membership

fee is not standard. Its amount differs from country to country. For instance, large countries such as Germany, Italy and France pay larger fees – two million Euros per year. As for smaller countries, their fee is about 100,000 Euros.

FP: Is Eurimages involved in all stages of project development? How is Eurimages financing distributed for the project development stages?

There are no restrictions in this regard. The most important thing is that the project should have obtained financing in its own country and the film should be distributed in the cinemas of its own country. We finance projects in all stages of development.

FP: Since 2007 Eurimages has participated in the digitalization process. This makes it easier for small countries to gain access to their own markets. What are the opportunities for Georgian films at the national and international markets in this regard?

The digitalization project refers only to the Eastern European countries, i.e. our new members who do not have this opportunity locally. They apply to us and we assist them in digitalization. This project supports digital distribution within the country. The financing of digitalization comprises only 5% of our budget. The remaining 95% is allocated to film production.

FP: Eurimages announces project competitions four times a year. How should projects be submitted? Are the director and producer allowed to send projects or should projects be submitted by official institutions such as the Georgian National Film Center? What is the maximum number of projects a country can submit per year?

Directors and producers may apply independently. Our system is very flexible – everything is done via the Internet. The main criterion is that a project should meet Eurimages requirements. An institution may also submit an application. So there are no restrictions. Of course, the process of financing is not easy, because we are allocating public money. But the rules are published on our website and are available to everyone.

Large countries that were founder members of Eurimages have a regulated system of co-production. For instance, France, which has the largest portion of annual co-production applications, mostly cooperates with Belgium. The Scandinavian states mostly cooperate with one another. There are no restrictions as to the number of applications per country. Any country may submit as many applications as it wants. It is simply the case that new members like Georgia have to make more effort to find partner countries. Due to this, the number of applications from such countries is small. So there are no restrictions as to the number of projects per country. One country may send as many as 50 projects per year. The number of financed projects does not depend on the size of the country. For example, Georgia is much smaller than Russia, but since it became a member of Eurimages, more Georgian projects have been financed than Russian ones. It is obvious that Georgia is actively involved in Eurimages projects. In December this year there will be three Georgian projects considered by the General Assembly in Vienna. It is very important for these projects to be fully developed. It is therefore favourable for a small new country to cooperate with experienced partners.

Despite the political tension between Georgia and Russia, the first project submitted from Georgia was a Georgian-Russian co-production involving a third country. Thus, cooperation in cinema is a good way of conflict resolution.

When voting for the submitted projects, as President I should be neutral. I represent Germany in Eurimages, but as President I try to abstain from interfering in the decisions of the Assembly. The function of the President is to deal with organizational activities and ensure fair processes. So I don't participate in the voting.

The make-up of the eight-person group changes all the time. Group members are selected on the basis of a vote, and a representative from every member country is in the working group once a year. Groups are formed on the basis of regional representation – Northern Europe, Southern Europe, etc. In addition to the working group, projects are considered by two external experts invited by Eurimages. The member countries provide the experts. The working group always takes into account the opinion of the experts. This makes the process more transparent and fair.

FP: Every year Eurimages awards prizes at European festivals. Does the prize guarantee further financing?

Yes, we award prizes at various festivals. One of these is a monetary prize for script development. Certainly, this award guarantees high quality and facilitates co-production, although the prize itself does not cover all the costs. The European Film Academy also awards Eurimages prizes to actors.

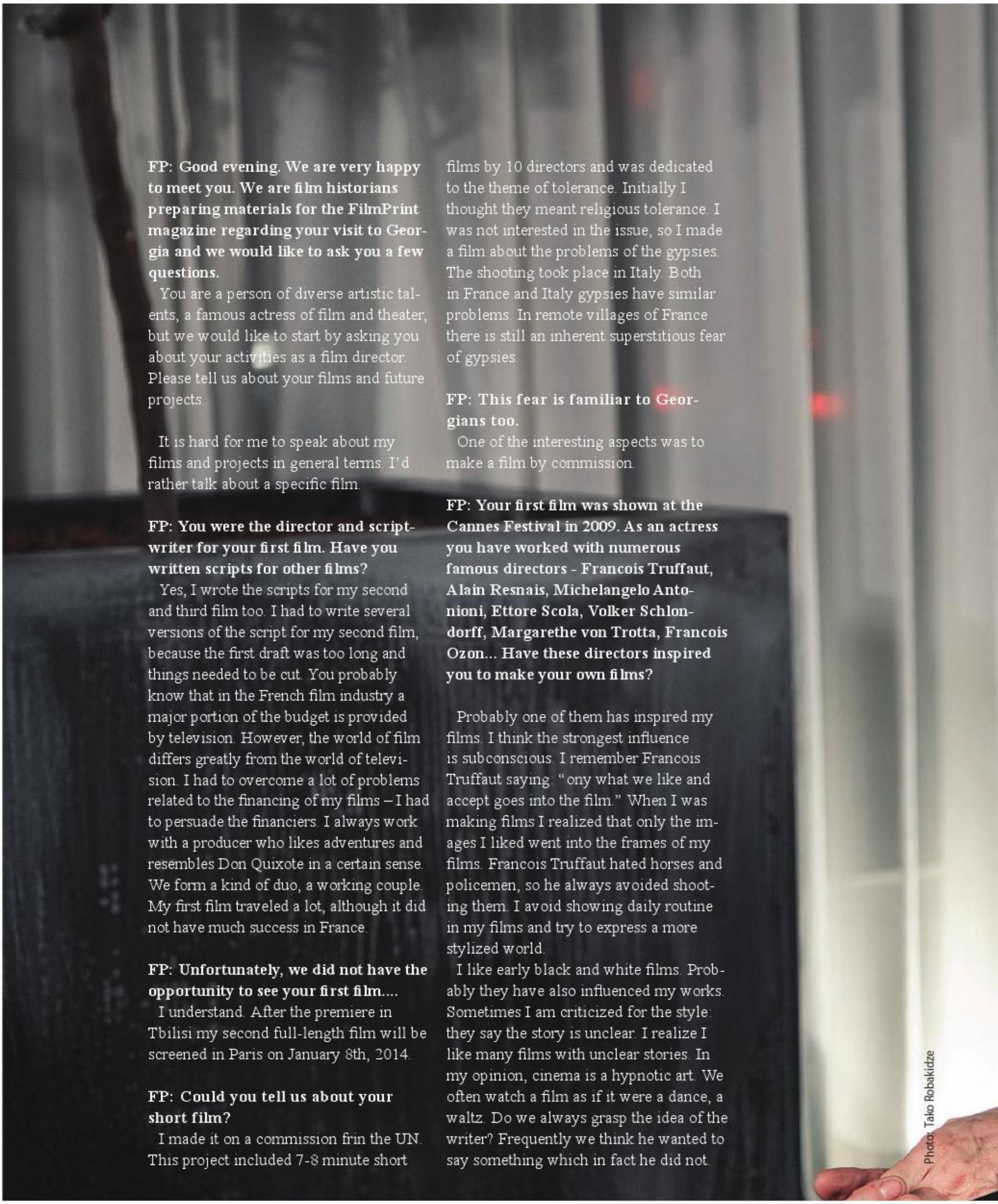
FP: And the last question: What is the main difference between Eurimages and the MEDIA program, which is also a major European institution for film financing?

The key difference is that MEDIA is focused on distribution, whereas we focus on co-production.

FP: Thank you for this interesting and informative conversation. We wish you an enjoyable stay in Georgia.

>> Dinara Maghlakelidze
and Keti Japaridze

Photo: Tako Robakidze



FP: Good evening. We are very happy to meet you. We are film historians preparing materials for the FilmPrint magazine regarding your visit to Georgia and we would like to ask you a few questions.

You are a person of diverse artistic talents, a famous actress of film and theater, but we would like to start by asking you about your activities as a film director. Please tell us about your films and future projects.

It is hard for me to speak about my films and projects in general terms. I'd rather talk about a specific film.

FP: You were the director and scriptwriter for your first film. Have you written scripts for other films?

Yes, I wrote the scripts for my second and third film too. I had to write several versions of the script for my second film, because the first draft was too long and things needed to be cut. You probably know that in the French film industry a major portion of the budget is provided by television. However, the world of film differs greatly from the world of television. I had to overcome a lot of problems related to the financing of my films – I had to persuade the financiers. I always work with a producer who likes adventures and resembles Don Quixote in a certain sense. We form a kind of duo, a working couple. My first film traveled a lot, although it did not have much success in France.

FP: Unfortunately, we did not have the opportunity to see your first film....

I understand. After the premiere in Tbilisi my second full-length film will be screened in Paris on January 8th, 2014.

FP: Could you tell us about your short film?

I made it on a commission frin the UN. This project included 7-8 minute short films by 10 directors and was dedicated to the theme of tolerance. Initially I thought they meant religious tolerance. I was not interested in the issue, so I made a film about the problems of the gypsies. The shooting took place in Italy. Both in France and Italy gypsies have similar problems. In remote villages of France there is still an inherent superstitious fear of gypsies.

FP: This fear is familiar to Georgians too.

One of the interesting aspects was to make a film by commission.

FP: Your first film was shown at the Cannes Festival in 2009. As an actress you have worked with numerous famous directors - Francois Truffaut, Alain Resnais, Michelangelo Antonioni, Ettore Scola, Volker Schlondorff, Margarethe von Trotta, Francois Ozon... Have these directors inspired you to make your own films?

Probably one of them has inspired my films. I think the strongest influence is subconscious. I remember Francois Truffaut saying: "ony what we like and accept goes into the film." When I was making films I realized that only the images I liked went into the frames of my films. Francois Truffaut hated horses and policemen, so he always avoided shooting them. I avoid showing daily routine in my films and try to express a more stylized world.

I like early black and white films. Probably they have also influenced my works. Sometimes I am criticized for the style: they say the story is unclear. I realize I like many films with unclear stories. In my opinion, cinema is a hypnotic art. We often watch a film as if it were a dance, a waltz. Do we always grasp the idea of the writer? Frequently we think he wanted to say something which in fact he did not.

Photo: Tako Robakidze

Every director has influenced me in a certain way. It was very pleasant to work with Italian directors. It was also enjoyable to work with directors who had made only a couple of films before. Some films became popular worldwide. There are other, less successful films that I have liked and enjoyed greatly

FP: In an interview you said that films exist on the basis of emotions and that the art of acting is to tell the truth by means of deceit. Is this your credo as a director? What is your style of working with actors?

I have little interest in reality. I think each of us has an accompanying world, or, rather, an obsession, but there is no truth in this parallel world: there is only a vision. Everyone sees the world they live in based on this vision. As for actors, fictitious characters and their emotions, I think emotion as an archetype is either existent or inexistent. Emotion cannot be expressed in acting.

Any work of art, be it poetry, a novel or any other invented and imaginary genre, is more real than our daily routine. That is why poets are above all others: they see the world differently. Their vision is in a different prism. When we read great masters like Tolstoy, Stendhal, Balzac or Dickens, we know the story is invented, but the emotions they describe are real.

FP: I would like to hear about your relationship with Francois Truffaut, as it is an important part of your life. You were Truffaut's inspiration. In what way has this relationship influenced your future career?

He led me into the world of cinema. Before I met him I was a theatrical actress and could not imagine ever being in a film. I used to go to castings and they told me I was too tall, too dark-skinned, too thin, too ugly, and so on. I think Francois Truffaut was a great artist and thinker. He decided to offer me a role, and thus influenced the decision of other directors who used to be too scared to put me in their films.

FP: You are a famous actress of theater and film. You have performed the same roles on stage and on screen, although the specifics of cinema and theater differ greatly. How do you perceive this difference?

I think these two diffferent worlds fill each other out. I used my theatrical experience in cinema and vice versa. For instance, when I am on stage, I know there is no chance of of making another attempt. In films, the camera is so close to my face that it is impossible to be false. So I try to be as frank as possible on stage too. I try to make every gesture as convincing as it is on the screen.

FP: Your roles are extremely diverse. The kaleidoscope embraces various genres, dramatic and comic characters. Which is closer to you personally and how do you select your roles in the cinema?

By nature I am rather tragic, so I prefer roles related to love and tragic stories. On the other hand I like comedies where the characters are serious, but the situation is comic. When they send me a script, I read it and make a decision immediately. As I turn the pages, I realize whether I like the character or not. This method of selecting roles is not the method of an adult experienced person. In my case the feeling of pleasure is decisive.

FP: You mean you select roles subconsciously, by intuition?

Yes, I smell them like a dog.

FP: Which director has had a significant influence on you apart from Truffaut?

It is hard to answer this question, because every director has influenced me in a certain way. It was very pleasant to work with Italian directors. It was also enjoyable to work with directors who had made only a couple of films before. Some films became popular worldwide. There are other, less successful films that I have liked and enjoyed greatly.

FP: In interviews you often call yourself an active pessimist. Is this your life credo?

Yes. I can characterize all my life like that. I have plenty of energy, but I often see things and events in a melancholic way. In such cases I tell myself: "Come on, think about it tomorrow".

FP: Is this how you express your active pessimism?

Exactly.

FP: Thank you very much for this interesting conversation. I wish you a successful premiere.

Thank you very much.

>> Dinara Maghlakelidze and Keti Japaridze.

Photo: Tako Robakidze

Photo: Mariam Patiashvili

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Georgian film director Marlen Khutsiev, who currently works in Moscow, was a special guest of the eighth International Festival of Auteur Films in Batumi. His most popular early film was "Spring on Zarechnaya Street". This representative of the elder generation of filmmakers is still going strong. He was Chair of the Jury of the Batumi Film Festival and was awarded a prize for his contribution to cinema. He gave a master class on feature films at Batumi University of Arts. Despite his extremely busy schedule, he agreed to give us an interview.

F.P. You were born in Tbilisi. What are your memories of this city? Do you still have friends there?

I had lots of friends in Tbilisi. Unfortunately, I have grown old and many of my friends are no longer with us. I have wonderful memories of Tbilisi. Back in Moscow I knew I would travel to Tbilisi from Batumi, and I was delighted at the thought. I keep imagining how I will walk the familiar streets and see familiar places. I have to visit my school and the theatre I used to go to. I also miss the cinemas I frequently went to in my youth. I will take a walk around the city and even climb the Funicular. My cousin is waiting for me in Tbilisi. I also want to visit Mtatsminda Pantheon and see everything that is so dear to me. Tbilisi is the city of my childhood. I remember how the war broke out. The streets were dark, but I walked a lot, because I knew the places very well and would not stumble in the darkness. When we first saw planes, we hid in the shelters. Later we paid no attention. I remember the first air alarm: we all rushed to a cellar. Later I stayed where I was. Once I lay in bed and told my mother: "Don't wake me up during the alarm, I want to sleep." Before that, in 1937, my father was arrested and we were deprived of our house. My sister was sent to the orphanage. I went to Telavi and spent some time there. When I returned to Tbilisi, the war had already started and a hospital was opened in my school building. So I continued my studies at the 14th boys' school.

F.P. When did you get interested in film direction and how did you manage to enter VGIK?

First I wanted to become a painter, but my mother (who was an actress) brought me to Tbilisi Studio (later called Georgian Film). I started working there as an assistant art director. I went to the shooting of Golden Path by Nikoloz Pipinashvili. That is when I changed my mind and "caught the cinema bug".

At that time I knew nothing about VGIK. By chance I learnt from my friend that there was a film institute in Moscow. After the war ended in 1945, a representative from VGIK came to Tbilisi and selected young people to study in Moscow. I was lucky to be in the group. We traveled by train, and it was an awful journey. Finally we reached Moscow and I started my studies under the guidance of a great professional – Savchenko. Unfortunately, Savchenko did not live to see my diploma. The censors made changes to his film Taras Shevchenko and he died as a result of the stress.

F.P. There are many famous Georgian directors who graduated from VGIK (for instance, Rezo Chkheidze, Tengiz Abuladze, Misha Kobakhidze, Otar Iosseliani, Alexandre Rekhviashvili, Merab Kokochashvili, Eldar Shengelaya and Giorgi Shengelaya). Was there something special about VGIK which influenced the style of these directors?

The first Georgian to graduate from VGIK was Nikoloz Pipinashvili. Rezo and Tengiz studied at VGIK in the same period as I, although they were a bit younger. Eldar started studying when I had already graduated. I met him at the shooting of my film "The Watchtower of Ilyich". He came to interview me and I was glad to meet Nikoloz Shengelaya's son. I met Giorgi later, as I saw his "Alaverdoba" which I liked a lot. I adore Eldar's films because they are full of humour and charm, which are important qualities for any serious film.

As for VGIK, Baadur Tsuladze says he was taught nothing there, but this is not true. VGIK was a specific space and the best environment to establish relationships. It was impossible not to learn anything in this environment. It was a union of people who were simply in love with cinema. This union was of great benefit for our professional growth. Apart from what we learnt from our tutors, we learnt a lot from one another. Georgians have always loved and appreciated VGIK.

F.P. Your first film Spring on Zarechnaya Street became popular at once. This film differed from others in that it focused on personality. In that period it was something new.

Yes. However, I should not judge whether my film was something new. In any case, I wanted it to be honest. It all started like this: my course-mate Felix Mironer wrote a script. We shared a room in the campus. We wrote diploma scripts and attended practical courses at the Kiev film studio. The Director of this studio was a very interesting man – Alexandr Valentinovich Gorski. He was in conflict with Khrushchev, and the latter dismissed him and later transferred him to a film studio in Odessa, which was in bad condition at the time. Gorski decided to revive the studio. He invited students who attended practical classes at the studio in Kiev. That is when we started making our first films. We made some films in Kiev too. The film studio in Odessa soon gained fame and respect.

F.P. You had to change the title of your second film: initially it was called "The Watchtower of Ilyich", but later the title was changed to "I am 20". What was the influence of censorship at the time? Did it hamper the development of cinema?

I had to change the title, although initially the script was published under the title "I am 20". In any case, "The Watchtower of Ilyich" was just a working title. We published the synopsis and called it "The Watchtower of Ilyich". Initially, as we wrote the script, we thought the main character would live in the place where Ilyich's watchtower was located. So there are two versions. When people asked me about these two titles I told them: "Don't worry, these are two different films".

As for censorship, it can be political, ideological, and so on. Certainly it hampered things, because in our country censorship was an ideological tool. Comments were made not on the basis of real shortcomings, but according to the wishes of the authorities. Frequently things were changed for the worse. However, the loss of censorship has has also led to the loss of reviewers. The job of the reviewers is very important, as they assess a film objectively and see what is wrong. I had a talented reviewer when shooting The Watchtower of Ilyich. My wife was also a film reviewer, although we did not work together, as I was against involving family members in my films. My wife was well aware of her responsibility and helped lots of film directors. She talked so much about other filmmakers that I even got jealous. She often gave me useful advice. As a matter of fact, we studied together at the Institute.

F.P. Your next film was Two Fiodors with Vasili Shukshin. He was a film director and writer. How did it happen that he got to act in your film?

Tarkovsky advised me to invite Shukshin to the film. Before that I hadn't even seen him. When I heard his voice, I realized he was the actor I needed and I fought hard to have him approved for the role. He used to read his stories to us. At that time I could hardly imagine what a good writer he would turn out to be. Nearly every VGIK student wrote literature, so I thought Shukshin was just one of them. But he became a great writer, director and actor. That is such a rare thing.

First I was simply glad to visit Batumi. Then I saw the program and the list of selected films and understood that the festival would be a significant event.

F.P. What about your other films - July Rain, The Month of May, Epilogue? Tell us about the process of script-writing. And, finally, how did you move from feature films to documentaries?

It's true that July Rain is a feature film, but there are some documentary chronicles in it. I have always been attracted by the documentary truth. The Month of May was based on a story, the same as Epilogue. In other cases I wrote the scripts myself. I constantly reworked the scripts in my mind to achieve something original. Working on Epilogue was a lucky opportunity to meet the marvelous actors Rostislav Plyatt and Andrey Myagkov. Generally I would invite almost unknown actors, but in this case I offered the audience their favourite actors. This was the only case where I deviated from my principle.

After this I received an offer to make a film about the Commune of Paris. In this documentary I compared the Paris of various eras. In general, films are constructed around parallels. Later, 10 years after the war, I made a film with a prologue and epilogue about contemporary youngsters who had just finished school. I would advise everyone to watch this film.

F.P. At one time you started working for television. Did this mean a decision to abandon filmmaking?

No. I was offered the position of artistic director and I accepted. Despite the different specifics of television, I made films as if they were meant for cinematic release. Later I returned to cinema.

F.P. Since 1978 you have been teaching, and there have been Georgians among your students. How would you evaluate them?

I have had many groups of students. There was a time when many talented young people wanted to enter the Institute. Among them was a Georgian girl Keti Gujabidze. It was impossible to admit everyone, although all of them were talented. There was one Kurdish guy. These youngsters said: "Admit this guy instead of us, because there are no Kurdish film directors". It was a very emotional moment. I addressed Rezo Chkheidze and he agreed to take care of this group. Because of this, I admitted everyone without entrance exams. There was another guy from Batumi – Soso Tughushi. He lives in Moscow and we are still good friends. Other students have gone to live in different places. Keti Gujabidze was a very talented girl. I also hope to meet her in Tbilisi.

F.P. At your master classes you showed your new film Nevechernyaya, which is about Tolstoy and Chekhov. The frames resemble images of the past and the music is wonderful. However, you said it is not the final version of the film...

The film has a documentary basis. To my mind, the ideas of Tolstoy and Chekhov are still very important. As for the music, certain things need to be changed. I often argue with the composers for my films (the only exception was Spring on Zarechnaya Street). I have good ear for music and have studied it, but, unlike my father, I don't play any musical instruments. But I understand music well... And in my films the music should sound as I perceive it. That's why, beginning from July Rain, I have worked without a composer.

F.P. I've noticed you are a great lover of poetry. This is clear in your films...

Certainly. Poetry plays an important role in film direction. But not all poetry is good. Generally, poetry is a method of expression, just like films. You could take as an example my adored Pushkin, who describes the psychology of the relationship between Yevgeni Onegin and Tatyana with great precision. So works of poetry provide rich material for film direction. Poetry is a kind of manual for film direction.

F.P. How do you evaluate Batumi Film Festival?

I like it very much indeed. First I was simply glad to visit Batumi. Then I saw the program and the list of selected films and understood that the festival would be a significant event. I said on TV that this festival should gain international fame, just likethe festivals in Venice and Cannes. The organizers are extremely responsible and do their best to make the festival an important event in the field of cinema.

>> Shorena Rostomashvili

Photo: Mariam Patiashvili

Joe Boyd is an American musical producer. He owned a production company called Witchseason and a successful record label - Hannibal Records. In 1966 he opened UFO, the first psychedelic club in London. Boyd has worked with famous musicians and groups such as Pink Floyd, Bob Dylan, Syd Barrett , Fairport Convention, Sandy Denny, Richard Thompson, Nick Drake, The Incredible String Band, and Vashti Bunyan... He was a friend of the legendary guitarist Jimi Hendrix and this year he presented a documentary film about Hendrix at the Batumi Film Festival.

F.P. The 60s were the most important period in American culture and music. At the time you left for Europe, namely London...

In 1964 I went to London as a manager of one of the music tours. I got an offer to open Electro Records in London. I thought the offer was interesting and agreed to do it. Later I left Electro Records to continue working independently. I opened a new folk club and did many things that were so typical of London. I like typical London things. I traveled to and fro – went to Los Angeles, New York, but I preferred living in Europe. It's interesting to have the coexistence of different cultures.

F.P. What is the difference between musical production in Europe and the USA?

It depends on the musical genre. I don't think there is such a great difference nowadays. There is more rap music in the USA and it differs from Rhythm and Blues. Anyway I'm not involved in production nowadays, so there are a lot of things that I don't know about.

F.P. In your opinion who are the people who gave birth to new eras in the history of music, came up with new sounds and became "idols"?

- Jimi Hendrix had this influence, as well as The Rolling Stones, Dylan, and of course The Beatles... They influenced a lot of people and events. Every musician is influenced by someone else. If you listen to Bob Marley, you will hear something of Curtis Mayfield. Every great artist is proud of their influences. I remember travelling in Southern Europe in the 1970s. In every corner I heard Santana's "Oye Como Va". His influence was really great...

F.P. In the 60s you established the first psychedelic club UFO in London. The club turned into a kind of social-political event.

UFO hosted groups like Pink Floyd, Soft Machine, and The Crazy World of Arthur Brown. Procol Harum played there too before they recorded A Whiter Shade of Pale, i.e. before they became popular. There were many groups, including the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band, Tomorrow, The Pretty Things, 10 Years After... It was part of youth revolution that happened in the USA, Holland, Britain and the hole world. Many aspects of this revolution were idealistic. Later these ideals were destroyed and there was a lot of unpleasant experience related to drug tests. People started abusing LSD. Commercial enterprises started to exploit drugs, and this was the end of the ideals. But I always remember the 1960s with great pleasure... Whenever we mentioned the 60s in London or the US, rightist politicians got angry. This means we had done many good things in that era.

F.P. Do you identify yourself with any genre?

I don't identify myself with genres. I am interested in individuals. If I say I like Bob Dylan, I don't mean I like pop as such. I like the Rolling Stones, but I'm not a fan of every British band. I was brought up on jazz, blues and classical music, but I listen to all styles if they are original and well performed.

F.P. Is it hard to be objective when you make a film about a musical idol who was at the same time your friend?

I didn't shoot Jimi Hendrix. I made the film after his death using recorded interviews. I think it is a passionate film about a genius. I wanted the story to be told by people who were close to him and I think I succeeded in this.

F.P. In the 60s and 70s when Hannibal Records was one of the most successful labels in Europe, you got interested in folk music...

I would rather say "world music". I started with what I liked and found that most of this music is close to roots and traditions, for instance ABBA, Kinks... It's hard to find a foreign rock group that creates original and interesting music. This is because the era of ABBA and "Kings" is over. Nowadays everyone has access to the internet. Lots of people listen and copy American and English music. I'd rather listen to a Georgian band singing Georgian music than a Georgian band singing rock music which is American (although there are exceptions with original rock music). I would be delighted to hear Georgian music which is an interesting mixture of traditional and contemporary music. I hope I can find groups like this in Tbilisi...

>> Neno Kavtaradze

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F.P. Mr. Seidl, you are a famous director and writer of successful films. The reaction of the audience and critics to your films is always diverse. What is your goal as a film director?

I can explain the goal of a film director only on the basis of my own works, other directors may view it in a different way. I want my films to arouse certain feelings in the audience. I never make entertaining films and my aim is to make people think. I try to offer a certain vision of the world. The audience should have an opinion regarding what I offer as a director. My films focus on social reality and this is how I see my task as a film director.

F.P. You reflect people in everyday situations. But your films show the intensity of life and tell about loneliness and lost love. Is this your vision of the world?

Certainly there are some short moments of happiness in everyone's life. We spend most of our life in search of these moments. Art, literature and films focus on these moments of happiness. However, I try to show despair and loneliness too.

F.P. Your films are very frank in showing the mechanisms that function in Austrian society as well as the conflicts that exist. Is it your trademark to break taboos and express the unpleasant sides of life?

My films do not focus on Austria and Austrians; they could have been made in France, Germany or any other European state.

F.P. I mean your documentaries focusing on the problems in Austrian society.

My documentaries could have been made in some other country too. For example, "Animal Love". These phenomena may occur in any country. People buy animals to tame them and teach them discipline. People need pets because they help overcome hardships, loneliness and despair in love. There are many pet shops in Tbilisi too. I make films about ordinary life, which, unfortunately, also has unpleasant sides. Frequently reality is very unpleasant, and people hate to see their negative sides in the mirror. The main themes of my films are oppression, exploitation in love, violence, and, in general, everything that occurs in families or love relationships.

F.P. The human body plays an important role in your films.

We live in a reality drawn by the media, in a world with ready-made prescriptions of human beauty. But reality is different and does not coincide with the standard of beauty advertised by the media. When a person looks into the mirror, they rarely see the standard beauty advertised in Western culture. I try to show reality in my films and show people as they are.

F.P. What is your style of working with the actors? For instance, Margarete Tiesel. How did she agree to play this role in your film?

Certainly, many actresses would have refused to play this role. Probably only 10% of actresses would have agreed to play it. However, such roles are an interesting challenge for actors. The main thing is that actors should not only agree to play such roles but they should be able to play them well. Margarete Tiesel managed to perform the role very well.

F.P. You always underline the importance of authenticity in films. What is the difference between authentic and non-authentic films?

If you watch a film and believe in what is going on there, the film is authentic. If you don't believe in what is going on and the reality is construed artificially, the film is non-authentic. Cinema is based on illusion, but this means the viewer should be involved in the illusionary world of the film.

F.P. Your trilogy "Paradise" tells about the wishes of three women. How did the idea for the trilogy arise?

This is a difficult question to answer. While working on a script, there are different ideas which are finally united into one. Initially I wanted to make a film about tourism because I was interested in the issue. Gradually the theme brought me to the idea of sex tourism, which is a very important issue in Western reality. Another theme was religion. And I also wanted to make a film about three different women.

F.P. Were these women intended to be members of one family?

Yes. I wanted them to be relatives.

The theme of the third film – excessive weight – is also a painful problem in contemporary society.

F.P. Your films focus on the desire for love and its impossibility. Is this your philosophy, do you think you are a pessimist?

If I thought like that, I would be unable to make films. However pessimistic my films may seem, they reflect reality. My works are based on a trust and secret belief in human dignity and love.

F.P. Thank you very much for the interesting interview.

>> Dinara Maghlakelidze

Photo: Tako Robakidze

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Polish film director Jerzy Lubach first arrived in Georgia in 1995 to collaborate with his course-mate Tamar Dularidze on the film In Search of the White Angel about Archimandrite Grigol Peradze.
In 2007, Jerzy Lubach continued the Georgian theme with the film Wearing a Four-Cornered Cap and a Tiger Skin, which was awarded the Grand Prize in the documentary section of Batumi International Film festival (BIAFF). Another Lubach film Descent to the Nubian Hell was awarded Grand Prize at the Saint Andrew's Cross Festival of Orthodox Films. In 2012, Jerzy Lubach and archpriest Henrik Paprotsky, consultant and participant in the film In Search of the White Angel, were awarded the Georgian Order of Dignity.

Jerzy Lubach and Tamar Dularidze are preparing two large-scale projects, which both need to be co-produced. Their main aims are the expression of the cultures of the two countries in cinema, concrete film projects and associated facts clearly revealing the relationships between Poland and Georgia.

F.P. You have experience of co-production. How did the idea of co-production arise? Not all coursemates co-produce films.

J. L. Initially we didn't have co-production in mind. We submitted applications for our first films separately: Tamar wanted to make a film about a Georgian painter, and I wanted to make a film about a Polish painter, Ziga Valishevsky.

T. D. Jerzy and I were Sergey Gerasimov's students and he said Ziga Valishevsky's life and works were worth a whole film and we should make one when we become professional film directors. We weren't happy about this idea. The two of us were very different: all we had in common was a love of Bunuel, Orson Welles and Hitchcock.

F.P. Currently co-production is viewed as a solution to film-making problems, especially with regard to industries damaged by historical events, as is the case with Georgia. Co-production is also very important for more developed European countries. Europe has gained a great deal of co-production experience. However, many people talk about the threat of the leveling of cultural diversity that may accompany joint productions. Although a financial salvation, co-production is related to threats and obstacles. How can we make it fruitful, and at the same time retain the cultural characteristics of the participant countries?

J. L. Currently we have two large-scale projects which would be impossible without co-production. However, initially we were not considering any kind of co-production.

Tamar's idea was a surprise to me, as I had heard nothing about Ziga's Georgian past. The Polish people have always respected Georgia and its culture, but we were not acquainted with Georgian literature with the exception of The Knight in the Panther's Skin, which is translated beautifully into Polish, or Nodar Dumbadze's novel "Me, Grandmother, Iliko and Ilarion", which I read again and again as an antidepressant. I think, in the same way, Polish literature is almost unknown to Georgian readers.

T. D. However, we should remember that the first translation of the Nobel Prize Winner Henryk Sienkiewicz's Quo

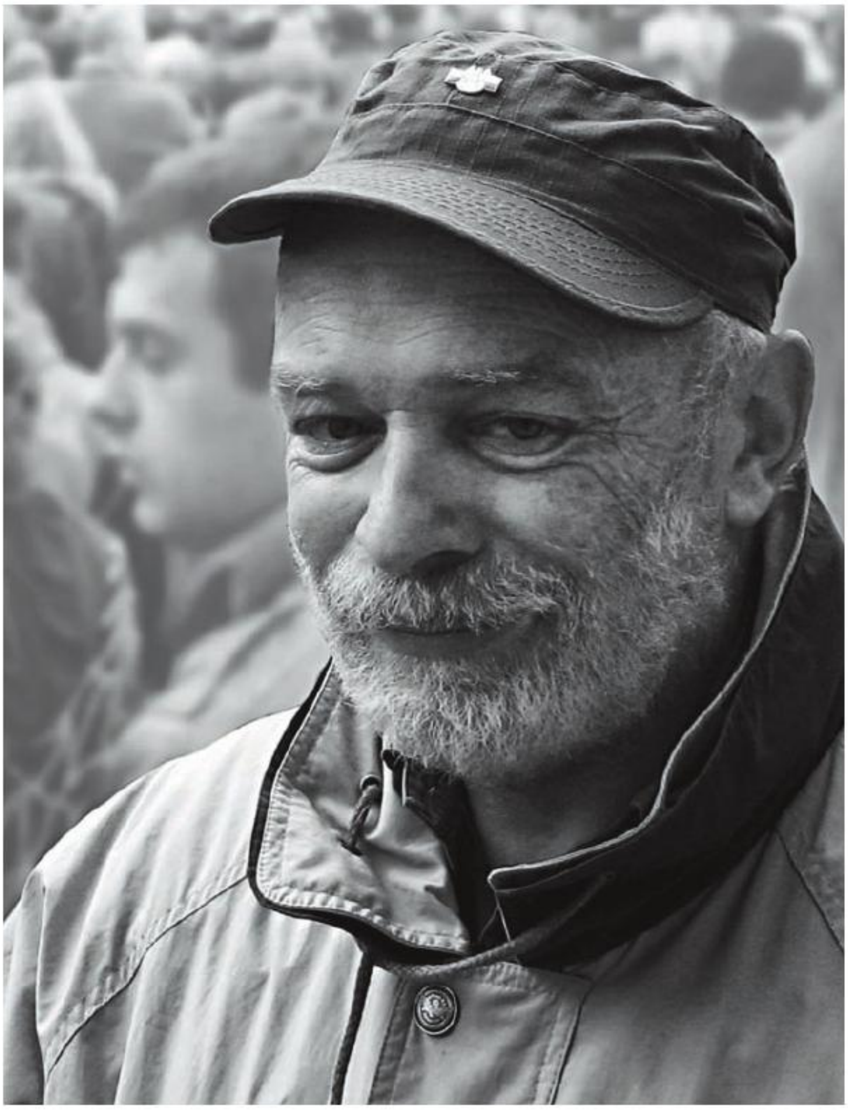


Photo: Tamar Dularidze, Jerzy Lubach

Vadis? was published in Ilia Chavchavadze's Iveria.

J. L. We should also bear in mind that both of our countries have been part of the Russian empire and we have a similar experience of self-protection.

T. D. Anyway, you had some doubts that Ziga had some connection to Georgia. I had never suspected that, I knew he was Polish and that was all.

J. L. We should also mention here Niko Pirosmani, who is well-known and loved in Poland. Having seen Pirosmani's paintings I re-evaluated Valishevsky's works displayed at the National Gallery. I was surprised to see Pirosmani's women and the Caucasian mountains on the canvases of the Polish painter. I knew Ziga had died long before the Polish people got to know Pirosmani's art.

T. D. and also Pirosmani's portrait...

J. L. I noticed the similarity when I saw The Painter and His Inspiration...

T. D. Both of us had been through disappointments and the mothballing of projects when suddenly Jerzy arrived in Moscow and proposed we make a full length feature about Ziga Valishevsky. Surprisingly enough, everyone liked the application: they explained that Ziga was not an ideological figure.
The main thing was that Ziga captivated us. Things moved rapidly: I was included in the Georgian Film delegation and sent to Warsaw, where an agreement was signed by the studios of the two countries. We quickly wrote the script.

J. L. Although I had never been to Georgia and Tamar had never been to Warsaw before...

T. D. We knew what we wanted: a true story of an exceptional person but not a biography. Only the fate of an artist in a changing epoch full of historical cataclysms in which Ziga himself was a participant.

J. L. And one more thing: we called the film A Legend because Valishevsky's works are full of legends and cultural archetypes. Ziga himself turned into a legend: first in Tbilisi and later in Poland, where he brought the legend of the Caucasus. You will see the rest in our film.

T. D. While working on our next script – the one about Grigol Peradze – the fear of producing "A Biographyzm" helped us again. We were confident that the axis of any film is a person and not a situation. We were so impressed by Ziga that we were not surprised when his wife's sister, the famous actress Halina Drohotska, told us a story we had already invented and included in the film.

J. L. In the case of Grigol Peradze, we had only a biography of a scientist fully described by archpriest Henrik Paprotsky. His life was a legend full of gossip, inventions and lies. He was unknown both in Poland and Georgia. We had to collect information in France, Germany, Belgium and England. So we started our search, which went on for a long time.

T. D. Our co-production started with the collection of materials and working on the script. During our collaboration we frequently remembered Rene Claire's words "The film is ready, it only needs to be shot." In our opinion, financing of co-productions should be used to express the authentic cultures of the participant countries.

F.P. The two films In Search of the White Angel and Wearing a Four-Cornered Cap and a Tiger Skin had interesting fates.

J. L. You create a film, it is screened on TV and in cinemas, people see it or don't see it. What's next? While shooting In Search of the White Angel a miracle happened: the Georgian Orthodox Church canonized the main character of our film. We filmed the church assembly at Svetitskhoveli and were the only ones to film this historic event. Tamar and I are very happy and proud about this.

T. D. The "Contract Officers" mentioned in this film brought Jerzy to another "Georgian" film. Independent Georgia formed an army, but there were not enough officers. To meet this demand, in 1920 an agreement was signed with Poland for further military education of Georgian cadets. After the Russian occupation of Georgia, Pilsudsky continued the contract and all Georgian cadets were enlisted in the Polish army. That is why they were called "Contract Officers".

J. L. Unfortunately, my film about Georgian officers - Wearing a Four-Cornered Cap and a Tiger Skin - had its second life in a situation that I wish had never occurred. I mean the Russian aggression in 2008. In that period it was screened four times on one of the main Polish channels, Polonia 1, which is broadcast worldwide. So the main characters of the film were associated with the events in Georgia. Just as in the film, Georgia was left on its own and it would have had to face the threat alone had it not been for Lech Kaczynski who urged his colleagues to support Georgia. Kaczynski managed to achieve what marshal Pilsudsky had failed to achieve in 1921, although Poland had the same military alliance with Georgia as it had with France. True, we did not have French support in 1920 when the Bolsheviks were within 18 kilometers of Warsaw. After negotiations between Poland and Soviet Russia, the latter moved its armed forces to the Caucasus: first to Azerbaijan and then to Georgia.
After the screening of the film, the

Polish Defense Ministry, where my permanent consultant – military historian Colonel Tadeush Kshonstek – was in charge of the Traditions Department, asked us to make an exhibition on Georgian Contract Officers. The exhibition was to be temporary, but the Ministry allocated significant funding. The materials were so interesting and impressive that they are now permanently displayed in Gdynia – the Polish military port on the Baltic Sea, at the Military Navy Museum. Why there? Because at the time the late Jerzy (Giorgi) Tumanishvili was still alive. He finished the war with the rank of Commodore (the rank below Admiral), but he had started as a Junior Officer on a destroyer. Poland had only three anti-torpedo ships of such power. When it became clear that the Germans would block the entire country from the Baltic Sea on the second day of World War 2, i.e. September 2nd, 1939, the three ships were ordered to sail to England. They left the port and Tumanishvili never returned to Poland. He knew that after the treason of the Western allies, who left Poland to Stalin, he would be executed because he was both a Pole and a Georgian.

When president Kaczynski saw our film, we were informed that Commodore Jerzy Tumanishvili would be awarded the highest military order and the rank of Counter-Admiral.

We filmed Tumanishvili in the mountains of Nevada. He was about 90 at the time, although he looked cheerful and had retained his military bearing. We asked him to travel to Poland, but he said he was too weak for such a trip. However, later he felt strong enough to go and there received the rank and order from President Kaczynski.

T. D. It must have been a miracle for Tumanishvili: for an unknown Polish director to make a film about Georgian officers in the Polish army. Although the film is not about him, the Polish President awarded him a rank, as if he were an acting officer, because real heroes are always "acting". This is a fascinating story about generous people and the power of cinema.

J. L. I will tell you a secret: the military officers, who became our friends through our consultant Tadeush, told us that they wanted to make an admiral's uniform for Tumanishvili, but they did not know his size. We showed them Tumanishvili's photos taken in 1939. These photos show that Tumanishvili was the tallest of all the officers in the navy.

My cameraman and I went to Gdynia. It turned out that we were staying at the same hotel. So I met a charming old man speaking to his wife in English. Goodness! What a charming old man he was! The next day the navy organized a marvelous event. In the port there is a historical monument of a ship, one of the three ships that took Jerzy Tumanishvili to Britain. He stepped aboard as a counter-admiral and the whistling ceremony started. 12 boatswains have to whistle when an admiral steps aboard a ship. Tumanishvili said: "Yes, this ship resembles the one I left Poland in". Then we moved on to a rocket boat and repeated the route of Tumanishvili's ship in 1939. Tumanishvili was in good form. We filmed it all and it is unforgettable. This is why our exhibition is permanently displayed at the Navy Museum in Gdynia.

At that time the wonderful Kote Kavtaradze was Georgian Ambassador to Poland. In six months he learned the Polish language and established a club of Polish-speaking diplomats. When the August war broke out, the Polish people supported Georgia. The Georgian Ambassador did his best to make use of this support to help those affected by the war: many children were operated on in Poland or spent holidays there... Together with the Ambassador, we travelled throughout Poland and screened the film.

T. D. We are also very thankful to Metropolitan Nikolas for making the film In Search of the White Angel available to the general public. Unfortunately, none of the channels has yet screened this film.

J. L. I was lucky to meet Nikoloz Matikashvili, holder of the highest military order of Poland - Vitruti Militari. He was awarded this order for courage in battle. He is the author of a very interesting work called "Cadets", telling the story of young cadets and their journey to Poland. At the University of Warsaw, President Saakashvili awarded an order to Nikoloz Matikashvili's widow. Later we found out that she had left her house in Poland to Georgia. Valerian Tevzadze, another holder of the Vitruti Militari and hero of Georgia and Poland, has also left us interesting memories. There is an inscription on his grave: "As a Georgian, I would like to be buried in Georgia, but I am also happy to be buried in the land of the heroic and generous Poles." We got to know these outstanding figures from our interest in Saint Grigol Peradze.

T. D. Our films and their characters have enriched our lives and broadened our world vision. However, our priorities are the painter Ziga Valishevsky and the artist and saint Grigol Peradze, who have built a bridge uniting the two nations. Currently we are engaged in work on these two projects.

>> Latavra Dularidze

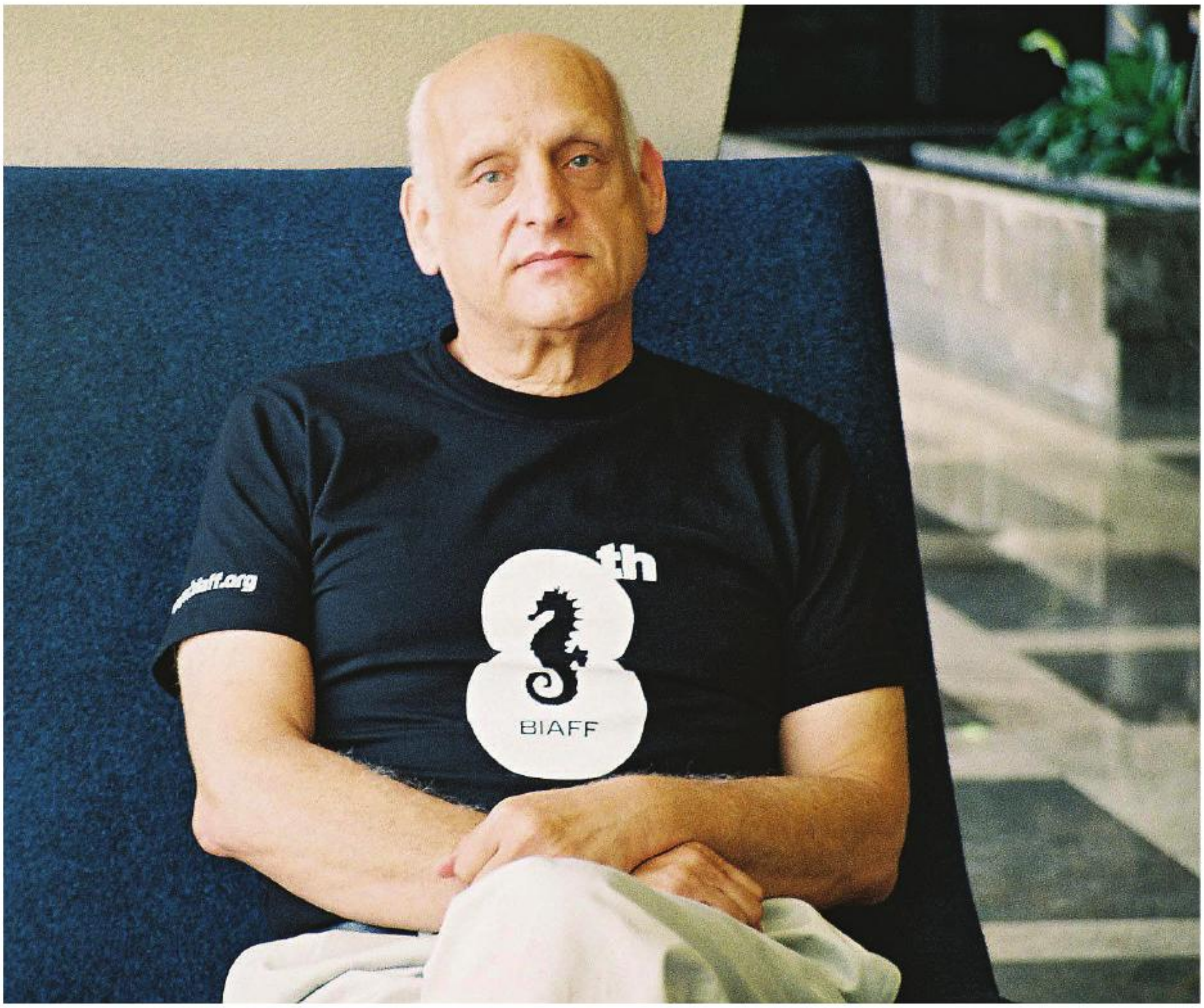


Photo: Mariam Patiashvili

With time you accumulate films you associate yourself with, they embrace your vision and style... even if they are made in cooperation with different directors.

His name has nothing to do with James Dean's character Jim Stark (in Nicholas Ray's film Rebel Without a Cause). He was born before this famous American film was made in the 1950s. He was a lawyer until he was brought into films thanks to Sarah Driver (Jim Jarmusch's girlfriend). Later he became one of the most successful producers in Europe and the US; he has worked with Jim Jarmusch and Gregg Araki. He is the producer of famous films such as Coffee and Cigarettes, Mystical Train, Down by Law, The Living End, and Doom Generation. This year Jim Stark was a member of the jury at the Batumi International Festival of Auteur Films. As part of the Festival he gave a master class to Georgian producers.

F.P. What is the role of a producer in independent films and how does it differ from working on mainstream films?

Mainstream films are financed and produced by Hollywood. They are distributed and sold by the studio. So the function of the producer is to arouse the interest of a studio. In independent cinema producers have to deal with distribution. When the preparation stage is over, we have to search for finance and find coproducers, state financing agencies, etc. When the film is finished we deal with distribution and sales, trying to attract public attention and interest. All this is much more complicated than just the production of a film. In Hollywood all this is done by the studios. If it is an independent film, the agent and the producer will select festivals.

F.P. Your films traveled to festivals in Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Sundance and Toronto. What is the role of a producer in the film's festival life?

Initially you have to think about where to arrange the premiere. In the ideal scenario you choose high-class festivals, although the competition is intense. You have to plan a strategy: select the right festival, attract public attention and get a sales company involved. Later, through the festival, contacts and agents, you try to bring the film to the right places. There are a large number of festivals worldwide and if you manage to get the film in a high-class festival, it attracts the attention of other festivals and a serial festival life follows.

F.P. Is Georgia interesting as a new market?

I think Georgia has great potential for filmmaking. The rest of the world is interested in the country, its people and its nature. You have marvelous landscapes and nice stories. So I think it is a good place to shoot films. You have young talents who are likely to make good filmmakers. I am confident that in a few years there will be plenty of good Georgian films and producers. I met Georgian producers and told them I would be happy to assist them if the project is good. I am willing to work with Georgian filmmakers and produce a Georgian film.

F.P. Frequently producers invest significant amounts in art-house films and the film fails to meet their expectations.. And vice versa: low-budget films are often very successful...

The answer is simple: either the story is not interesting or the script is not fully developed. Film production needs plenty of time and effort. You have to select an interesting story and imagine what the audience would like to see. Sometimes a director and producer want to tell a story which is of no interest to the audience. You can invest as much as you want, but you will have no audience. Many Hollywood films face similar problems. Therefore it is necessary to have a good script. This is the most important issue. As for low-budget films, I have seen some of these films in Georgia, for instance "Susa", which are very interesting. Why do we make low-budget films? Because it is simple, there are only a few characters, there is no expensive set. Sometimes films reflect a historical period and you need costumes, computer-generated images. Now films are cheaper thanks to digital video. You film with a camera

I think Georgia has great potential for filmmaking. The rest of the world is interested in the country, its people and its nature. You have marvelous landscapes and nice stories

and make the sound, colors and editing in your laptop. So it is quite possible to make a good film on a low budget.

F.P. You said the main thing about a film is the story. Do you often work on adapted scripts? Is the literary source a guarantee of success? In the case of Bukowski you wrote the script yourself...

I think everyone searches for a story that they would like to work on. The majority of films are based on original stories and scripts. I worked on the adaptation of Charles Bukowski's novel "Factotum" directed by Bent Hamer and starring Matt Dillon. So if there is a book written by Bukowski, everything seems easy. The problem is that the book contains a lot of text which you have to abridge for the film. In the case of Bukowski we had marvelous dialogues and this made our job easier. Bukowski had heard these dialogues in different situations and this was great for the actors. A popular practice in the USA is to find small-scale European films and turn them into large-scale American ones. For example the German film "Prince Avalanche"... Sometimes you might see a newspaper article and make a good film using this material.

F.P. This is your fourth visit to Georgia. In previous years you went to other film festivals. What is your impression of the Batumi Film Festival?

The Batumi festival has proved that Georgians will watch films made beyond the borders of Georgia. This festival is a unique opportunity for the Georgian audience to watch auteur films. At some screenings the halls were full to bursting, at others – less so... As for the student festival, where I was a member of the Jury, the situation there is different because the short films made by students are not aimed at the public at large. But you can still find talented directors with lots of potential. This festival is important for the Georgian market, which is not yet so diverse. The festival enables Georgians to learn what is going on in the film industry worldwide.

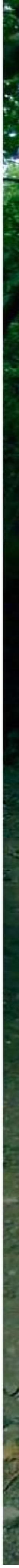
F.P. Which directors were the most comfortable and interesting to work with?

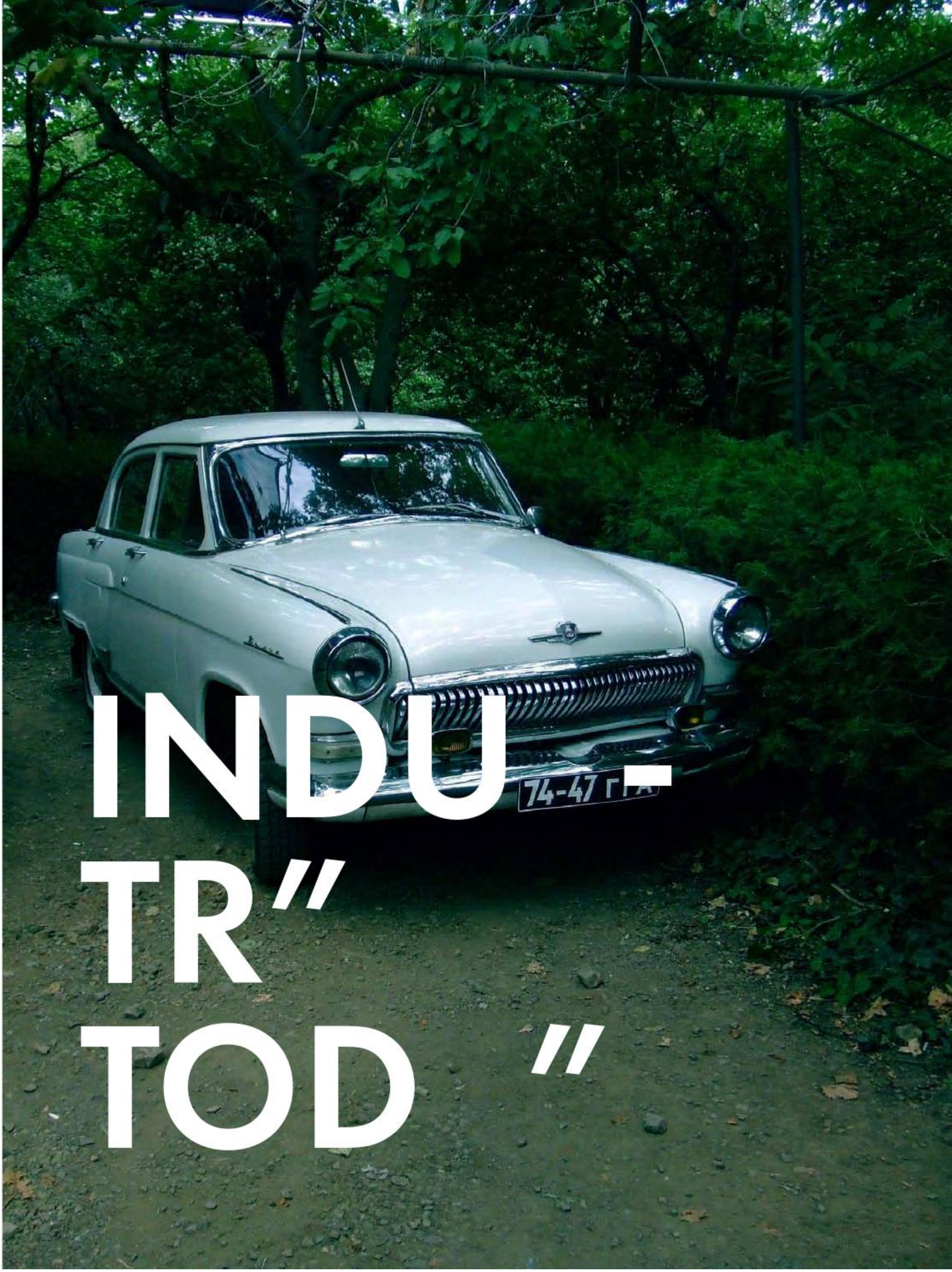
I think I have been very lucky as I have worked with extremely talented high-class directors such as Jim Jarmusch, Gregg Araki and Bent Hamer, who is the best director in Norway and even the whole of Europe. His films are becoming better and better with time. I would like to mention Fridrik Fridriksson, the only Icelandic director nominated for an Oscar. Recently I finished working on a film by Szabolcs Hajdu – one of the most talented directors of the Hungarian new wave. I intend to make four films in Mexico... Probably I won't make much money, but these directors are extremely talented and I am happy to work with them.

F.P. What advice would you give to young inexperienced producers?

It's not easy to make a lot of money. No matter whether you build houses, construct trade centers or start up computer companies. Only hard work can bring money. But talented and hard-working people are engaged in filmmaking not just for the money but largely for their interest in cinema as art. You have to think a lot and sacrifice a lot if you want to make a good film. A film is not made for the sake of finance. You should look for new interesting and talented people, work with them and help them make good films. With time you accumulate films you associate yourself with. They embrace your vision and style... even if they are made in cooperation with different directors.

>> Neno Kavtaradze

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Filmmakers who had the opportunity to attend a training course organized by the British Council, Batumi International Film Festival and the Georgian National Film Center will consider September 16th-18th as one of the most important dates.

The participants have certainly attended many other courses, but they say the training program offered by Microschool International is of special importance.

Microschool International aims to support filmmakers who already have a certain experience in the film industry and have created short films, low budget films, commercials, music videos, etc.

Some information about Film London and Film London Microwave:

Film London, a film and media agency established in the capital of the UK, is aimed at the development of the British film sector.

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Microwave is a famous scheme embracing low budget feature films. The scheme was set up by Film London and BBC Films and is supported by Creative Skillset. The aim of Microwave is to discover and support talented filmmakers.

The British delegation visited Georgia twice prior to the training. First in December last year, the Talents Development Manager Kevin Dolan arrived in Georgia to meet our filmmakers and adjust the training to the needs of the Georgian market.

On the second occasion Kevin Dolan came with Maggie Ellis, Head of Production and Olivier Kaempfer, producer of a successful British film "Borrowed Time". Representatives of Microschool International gave a presentation about their organization and screened "Borrowed Time" to a Georgian audience. During this event, a call for applications for the future training courses was announced. It was planned to hold the training within BIAFF on September 16-18.

Seven Georgian projects applied for the training courses. Five Georgian projects and one British project were selected.

The course was top quality and the responsibility shown by the organizers was felt in everything. Three mentors for producers and three mentors for scriptwriters focused on a total of six projects. Individual meetings were planned so that

Mike Kelly and Mia Bays;
Vladimer Kacharava

the mentors and participants had sufficient time to discuss and analyze each project. The first half of the day was allocated for plenary sessions where mentors shared their international experience.

The film value chain in Georgia and Britain was also discussed at the plenary session (Michael Kelly). Scriptwriter Paul Freiser proposed an exercise for the participants to do and they filled in a questionnaire, which was a kind of a guideline for script-writing and presentation. By means of this seemingly simple questionnaire, participants diagnosed their scripts and outlined the prospects for future development.

A lecture given by Deborah Sathe (producer) and Jay Basu (script-writer) focused on the relationship between the producer and scriptwriter.

Mia Bays talked about the role of a creative producer and the problems of sales and distribution.

Olivier Kaempfer, producer of the successful British film "Borrowed Life", made a case study of his film. He spoke about the way a film passes from the film set to the cinema, as well as online distribution and presentation at festivals.

Mia Bays and Mike Kelly talked about international film sales.

On the last day mentors discussed project packaging and pitching. After this, the participants pitched their projects.

This workshop differed from all other workshops in that it gave the participants information in a simple language, with minimum pressure.

"...The workshop differed from other workshops in its creativity and management. The recommendations and advice from professional and friendly mentors have been very useful to me." - Nene Kvinikadze.

"From my experience, I can say that this workshop was the best. The tutors were extremely high level and deeply understood each script" - Keti Machavariani.

The guests of the training course were: Christine Bardsley, representative of the British Council's London Office, and Maia Darchia, representative of the Tbilisi Office.

Tamar Tatishvili, former director of the Georgian National Film Center, made a special contribution to the course and attended as an independent coordinator.

>> Irma Janjgava

INI -

EAVE (European Audio Visual Enterprise) was established in 1988 and is currently one of the leading training projects for producers working in feature and documentary cinema as well as the television industry. The goal of EAVE is to gather producers and other filmmakers from all round the world, develop their skills and establish links with the aim of co-production.

Every year about 50 participants from Europe, Russia, South America, Asia and Africa are selected for EAVE's three-week workshops. Producers participate with scriptwriters (during the first two weeks). Sessions are facilitated by leading European producers and script-writing experts.

Upon the initiative of the Georgian National Film Center, this year MINI EAVE was held for the second time, comprising a three-day workshop in summer 2013 and one online session in autumn 2013.

MINI EAVE in Georgia is a continuation of efforts carried out by GNFC with the aim of improving the quality of script-writing in Georgia (including the awarding of script development grants, introduction of an award for best script at the Gala annual literary contest. etc.).

Such workshops are very important for the development of Georgian film. The training offers new methods and systems. Previously film production in Georgia did not include script development, but such initiatives have made it clear that project development and production should be preceded by a very significant stage of script development.

The first stage of the program, a three-day workshop, included open sessions for participants with and without projects. The focus was placed on script development, pitching techniques, producing and co-production.

The mentors were Jani Thiltges and Jacques Akchoti, who arrived in Tbilisi for the second time this year. They are very famous not only within EAVE but also within the large family of the European film industry. Jani Thiltges is a member of the European Film Academy and has been EAVE Chairman and Head of Studies. Sev-

Roberto Olla; David Gujabidze, Merab Kokochashvili, Beso Odisharia, Nikoloz Abramishvili.

eral years ago he was named one of the best producers in France.

Jacques Akchoti, who initially seemed rather severe, but at individual meetings was most open and friendly, helped participants to develop scripts, discover problems and improve them. This script magician has cooperated with famous directors such as Lars Von Trier and Robert Bresson. Producer Roshanak Behehsht Nedjad, member of the German and European Film Academies, gave participants an explanation of the specifics of "pitching" and the dramatic situation of describing a project in a very short time. The workshops were attended by Eurimages Director Roberto Olla, who also shared his experience with the participants.

1. Terzo Mondo – producer Nikoloz Abramishvili, scriptwriter and director Merab Kokochashvili
2. Atinati – producer Lela Akiashvili, scriptwriter and director Lali Kiknavelidze
3. White Hare – Producer Nikoloz Gugushvili, scriptwriter and director Vako Kirkitadze
4. Dede – Producer Vladimir Chikhradze, scriptwriter and director Mariam Khachvani
5. Ada's Cinema – Producer Irakli Baghaturia, scriptwriter Maka Kukulava

Participants without projects were: Vato Kavtaradze, Alexandre Koridze, Eka Ioseliani, Levan Dvali, Nino Jincharadze and Vladimer Mokeria.

Participants gained important experience during the three days of the workshop. The training clearly revealed the problems of current Georgian cinema. We have lots of stories to tell the contemporary world, but, we don't speak the language necessary to tell these stories. This dramaturgical language was taught by the trainers at EAVE. In this short period they managed to provide new and useful information to the participants. Due to the lack of knowledge of the basics of dramaturgy, Georgian directors are afraid of scriptwriters, just as they

Eka Jojua, Jacques Akchoti, Jean Thilges, Nana Janelidze, Roshanak Behesht Nedjad, Roberto Olla, Beso Odisharia, Giorgi Khabashvili

are of film critics. They are scared of the new methods explained at similar workshops. The main reason is the lack of education. We are unfamiliar with the European school and worried about things we do not know. We consider them to be a priori bad or useless. "Why do we need dramaturgy in filmmaking?!" (probably many of us have heard this phrase from directors, just as we have often heard "How does he know what I wanted to say?" (said about film critics by directors who are frequently unclear about what they really want).

The three days of the workshop convinced the Georgians that the story on paper should be well-structured and the story of the main character should be unique. The lack of genres in contemporary Georgian cinema was outlined as one more problem. For instance, comedies are neglected, even though they are most suitable for current reality. In order to develop a film industry, the audience should be brought back to the cinemas (the insufficient number of cinemas is another problem). The culture of cinema-going should be revived (and people should not go to the cinema only to eat popcorn). However, the above-mentioned is impossible without appropriate government policy.

Similar to the filmscript dramaturgy, these three summer days had a dramaturgy of their own. The participant projects will be developed further: the summer session is followed by online sessions in October.

>> Maka Kukulava